

Hafa Adai!

World Bank: 11 Pacific Island countries expected to see slower growth in '24, '25. **PAGE 2**  
Arrest warrant out for man in scheme to illegally transport Chinese men to Guam. **PAGE 3**

# \$1 Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

[www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

THURSDAY MARCH 7, 2024

Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 48

[www.facebook.com/saipantribune](http://www.facebook.com/saipantribune)

## Aldan: Tinian economy is doing well

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
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REPORTER



Aldan

With the ongoing military projects on Tinian, the island's economy is doing relatively well, but they also have problems maintaining a sufficient workforce in the

» **But touchback issue affects small businesses**  
» **Mayor describes defunct Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino 'as elephant in the room'**

private sector, especially with the touchback issue, according to Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan.

Aldan said in an interview last week that having a good economy on Tinian is not only good for the municipality, but

*See ALDAN on Page 4*



Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Joseph C. Guerrero gives his remarks during the Chamber's general membership meeting yesterday at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio.

By CHRYSTAL MARINO  
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CORRESPONDENT

Although the three cruise ships that recently visited

Saipan were a good thing as they brought several hundred tourists to the CNMI and Garapan businesses saw some

*See SMALL on Page 4*

### INSIDE

GUAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
PROGRESS NOW AND FOREVER

### BUSINESS

The Guam Chamber of Commerce is turning 100 this year and kicked off its Centennial Anniversary during its packed general membership meeting on Feb. 28 at the Guam Hilton Resort and Spa.

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### NATION

President Joe Biden and his predecessor, Donald Trump, romped coast-to-coast on Super Tuesday, all but cementing a November rematch.

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### WORLD

Three days of negotiations with Hamas over a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages failed to achieve a breakthrough on Tuesday.

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Gonzales

## Gonzales to join NMII delegate race

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
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REPORTER

Assistant attorney general Keisha Blaise, who was counsel for the Commonwealth Casino Commission, has

resigned from the OAG effective this week, while Andrew Yeom's temporary reappointment as CCC executive director expired last week.

Yeom and his counsel, Blaise, however, completed Friday the three-day

hearing whether to revoke or not the exclusive casino license of the Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC. The two also engaged in settlement discussions with IPI director/manager Howyo

*See BLAISE on Page 4*

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES  
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REPORTER

The race for CNMI delegate heats up, with John Oliver "Bolis" Gon-

zales, president of the Northern Marianas Descent Corporation, gearing up to announce his candidacy. That would make him the third person to join the delegate race.

Gonzales' team issued a press release yesterday, stating he would be officially announcing on March 17 his candidacy in the upcoming

*See GONZALES on Page 4*



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# Local

## World Bank: 11 Pacific Island countries expected to see slower growth in '24, '25

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Eleven Pacific Island countries are expected to see slower growth in 2024 and 2025, as the boost from the COVID-19 pandemic recovery fades and fiscal policies gradually lighten, according to the World Bank's Pacific Economic Update.

The March 2024 World Bank's Pacific Economic Update also finds that growth decelerated to 5.5% in 2023 after a historically high growth rate of 9.1% in 2022—the first year of the recovery.

The Economic Update outlines the economic status of Pacific Island countries after the initial pandemic shock.

The Pacific Island countries are the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

The Economic Update findings were discussed by World Bank economists and authors during a media briefing at the World Bank office in Pohnpei yesterday. The Update pro-

vides a twice-yearly assessment of the 11 Pacific Island economies.

The report also finds that the reduction in growth is due to the group's largest economy—Fiji—moving toward its long-term growth rate after a strong rebound from the pandemic in 2022. This moderation reflects slowing economic activity in Fiji, which accounts for more than half of the region's output.

When Fiji is excluded, the remaining Pacific Island countries experienced accelerated growth in 2023, after three years of contracted output.

Average inflation declined from a peak of 7.5% in 2022 to 6.5% in 2023, reflecting significant labor and supply shortages in tourism and remittances-led countries like Palau, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

Shifts in global economic growth, trade, and international tourism pose significant challenges to economic prospects and poverty reduction, risks that could heighten due to geopolitical tensions.

Despite the ongoing economic recovery, Pacific Island

countries still face formidable challenges.

Medium-term growth prospects have worsened, with output significantly below the pre-pandemic trend.

More than half of Pacific countries in the report are projected to see slower per capita growth than advanced economies, leading to widening income gaps and deteriorating prospects for poverty reduction, according to the Update report.

Ekaterine Vashakmadze, who is the World Bank senior economist in the Pacific, said that despite a commendable rebound in growth after lifting pandemic restrictions, Pacific Island countries will face challenges in bringing full recovery output growth to its pre-pandemic path.

Vashakmadze said fundamental reforms to invigorate investment growth can help improve medium-term growth prospects.

World Bank senior economist Reshika Singh said risks remain as adverse shifts in the global economy, trade, and tourism may pose challenges.

es to the economic prospects and poverty outcomes. Singh said those could stem from an uncertain global environment, most notably heightened geopolitical tensions.

Lars M. Sondergaard, who is the World Bank's economist for Human Development in the Pacific, said if Pacific children struggle with reading proficiency by the end of

primary school, they will face daunting hurdles to succeed in their further education.

While the situation is improving, progress is slow, Sondergaard said.

### 'Bermudes' resignation, Camacho's reinstatement not related'



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Department of Public Safety acting commissioner Anthony Macaranas answers questions in this file photo.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Acting Department of Public Safety commissioner Anthony Macaranas affirms that the reinstatement of Sgt. Peter Camacho, the officer who Gov. Arnold I. Palacios personally wrote to former commissioner Clement Bermudes about, has nothing to do with the ex-commissioner's resignation.

Back in January, Bermudes resigned from his post after

being told to do so by Palacios. A few days later, a memorandum dated December 2023 resurfaced where Palacios had expressed concerns over Bermudes not following his instructions, after Bermudes terminated Camacho. Last Feb. 15, Macaranas withdrew the notice of termination issued against Camacho.

Macaranas has now issued a statement saying Bermudes' resignation had nothing to do with the reinstatement of Camacho.

"I took that decision myself; it was my decision to reinstate him but with conditions," he said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Camacho had filed multiple grievances against DPS, alleging the department violated his due process rights by precluding him from applying for a merit-based salary increase, even if he was the top qualifying candidate as outlined in the rate increase announcements.

Camacho also alleged that DPS selected unqualified candidates for the salary increase, violating the open, competitive selection policies of the Civil Service Commission's rules and regulations.

Camacho also appealed the CSC's decision denying the grievances he filed against DPS, alleging that the commission violated his rights, as well as the OGA. The appeal was filed with the Superior Court.

According to Camacho's lawyers, the commission violated Camacho's substantive and procedural due process rights by failing to notify him of a Dec. 5, 2023, special meeting and depriving him the opportunity for his grievances to be heard.

In addition, Camacho's lawyers claim that the commission unanimously denied Camacho's grievances after deliberating in an executive session that's away from the public and thus violating the OGA.

DPS was also named a party in the appeal.

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

The CNMI Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division will start the CNMI 2024 Prevailing Wage Study (PWS) survey beginning on March 01, 2024 and notifies all businesses and employers in the CNMI to log on to the CSD Data Collection Portal and complete the PWS survey questionnaire.

All businesses and employers (Private & Public), with and with no employees, are urged to complete this survey before March 15, 2024.

Data Collection Portal Link:  
<https://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp/>

## Arrest warrant out for man in scheme to illegally transport Chinese men to Guam

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has issued an arrest warrant for one of the four men who allegedly conspired to illegally transport Chinese nationals from Saipan to Guam. All four are currently out on bail.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona approved yesterday the U.S. Probation Office's petition for an arrest warrant against Lee Jesse Omar Reyes, who has allegedly failed to comply with his release conditions and has tested positive for methamphetamine use.

In her petition for the revocation of Reyes' pre-trial release, probation officer Juanette David-Atalig claims that Reyes has failed to report to a noncompliance meeting, failed to contact her, and, since being placed on pretrial release, has allegedly tested positive for methamphetamine once and failed to submit to five more drug tests.

Last Jan. 23, a grand jury handed down an indictment alleging Reyes and three others conspired to transport Chinese nationals from Saipan to Guam by boat in an illegal scheme that would allow these aliens to bypass U.S. immigration. On that date, Magistrate Judge, Heather L. Kennedy issued an arrest warrant that was executed on Jan. 29.

On Jan. 30, Reyes made his initial appearance before Manglona. The court released Reyes on a \$1,000 unsecured bond with conditions to include pretrial supervision and random drug testing.

On Feb. 13, the court granted David-Atalig's request to modify the defendant's conditions of release, to include substance abuse treatment after the defendant admitted to using methamphetamine on Feb. 4.

Reyes also changed his plea that day and the court ordered that he remain in contact with David-Atalig.

On Feb. 23, a petition for action was filed in court after Reyes failed to report that his sweat patch "came off."

The petition states he also failed to call his supervising officer on Feb. 21 and 23 as instructed.

On Feb. 28, David-Atalig said she conducted an unannounced home visit where she instructed Reyes to report to the U.S. Probation Office

that day for a noncompliance meeting and testing. He was also advised to call the officer in the event he could not re-

port on time.

"The defendant failed to report for the meeting, and he failed to contact this officer.

Since being placed on pretrial release, the defendant tested positive for methamphetamine once and failed to submit to

five drug tests. The defendant appears to be struggling with complying with the supervision conditions imposed

by the court. The defendant has checked in via telephone three times and tested negative once," states the petition.

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## Who is Jason Palmer? Previously unknown Democrat beats Biden in American Samoa's Democratic caucus

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—President Joe Biden was sweeping every Democratic contest on Super Tuesday—except for American Samoa.

He fell short there to a previously unknown candidate named Jason Palmer on Tuesday. Out of 91 ballots cast in the territory's caucus, Palmer won 51 and Biden won 40, according to the local party.

The outcome will hardly derail Biden's march toward his party's nomination. Only six delegates were at stake in the U.S. territory, a tiny

collection of islands in the South Pacific with fewer than 50,000 residents.

Palmer, 52, appears to have campaigned in the territory. On the day before the caucus, he posted on X that "Washington D.C. is long overdue for a president who will be an advocate for American Samoa." His account includes pictures of young people holding homemade campaign signs.

On his website, Palmer describes himself as a Baltimore resident who has worked for



A sailing ship is seen in the harbor at Pago Pago, American Samoa, in July 2002.

various businesses and nonprofits, often on issues involving technology and education. He did not immediately



### NEW PAINT JOB

The historic Japanese cannon overlooking Sasanhaya Bay on Rota, the Marianas, was given a facelift in February 2024 by high school students working with Marianas Visitors Authority under the CNMI Public School System Co-op Education Program.



J.D. Barcina, left, and Sonjoe Manuel of Dr. Rita S. Inos Jr./Sr. High on Rota, the Marianas, repaint a historic Japanese cannon in February 2024. The students are experiencing working with the Marianas Visitors Authority under the CNMI Public School System Co-op Education Program.

### ALDAN

*From page 1*

also for the entire Commonwealth, but the question ultimately comes down to whether Tinian has enough workers.

He said the ongoing Divert Airfield Project of the U.S. Air Force affects not just the CNMI, but the economy of the entire chain of the Marianas. After many years of talking about these military projects, some of these projects are now underway, bringing millions of dollars to the region, he said, adding that all these

benefit the CNMI through taxes paid by the contractors.

He concedes, though, that the touchback provision—which requires foreign workers to exit the CNMI temporarily—is hurting a lot of companies, even the small mom-and-pop stores, retail stores, restaurants, and small construction firms.

The touchback rule of the 2018 Northern Marianas U.S. Workforce Act requires foreign workers to return to their home countries before their consecutive work visa petition is processed. The rule began to kick in for most workers last year.

As for the defunct Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, Aldan described it as "a white elephant in the room."

He said they also want to help the owners of the property to find people that are interested in opening up the Tinian Dynasty.

Aldan said the building is dusty, but the structure is still intact and may need millions of dollars to repair.

Tinian Dynasty's casino operation stopped in August 2015, while its hotel operation halted in March 2016.

Aldan disclosed that they have a couple of people or com-

panies, and even the military, that have come over and looked at the Tinian Dynasty property.

"For me, even if it's only the hotel side, I'm good. That's 400 rooms," he said.

Aldan said many people come to Tinian and it's a challenge to find a place for them to stay as the hotels are always fully booked.

He said he has already requested the Tinian Chamber of Commerce to provide him with data on the impact of the military projects on the municipality. Aldan expects to see some big improvements in the collection of revenue.

you're barely making payroll, that's not a healthy business, right?" he added.

Right now, Guerrero said many small businesses are just doing enough to keep their businesses afloat. "And that's not a healthy business environment when all you do is just making sure the bills are paid and not have anything extra to expand or grow your business or buy new furniture or make other improvements."

"We're hopeful that tourism is going to pick up slowly. It was nice to hear the Hong Kong Airlines plans to fly here, but then again, Asia pulled out, right? And so they're just trying to fill, I think, a void. And so, yeah, we're still, we're hopeful, but very cautious in the business community."

### SMALL

*From page 1*

good improvement, the overall picture shows that the impact is still small.

This was the gist of the comments of Saipan Chamber of Commerce board of directors president Joseph C. Guerrero in a conversation just after the Chamber's general membership meeting yesterday in San Antonio.

"I think it has had some impact, but the relative impact I think is small," Guerrero said.

He pointed out that, unless the CNMI receives cruise ships every day, the impact is very small and it's only for specific types of businesses.

"The ships, we welcome them, but...for example, the

[passengers] get off the ship at 9am or 10am, and then they have to go back, make their way to the ship at 5pm," so they're only on the island for a short period.

Also, he said, only the restaurants that are open for lunch are the only ones that benefit from them.

"For example, my business, we're not open at lunch yet, so we don't receive any of that benefit. And there's other businesses in Garapan that don't open for lunch, but only dinner. We welcome them, but the impact is very little," he added. Guerrero operates the Naked Fish Bar and Grill restaurant.

Although appreciative of the hard work of the Marianas Visitors Authority, Guerrero said that in the overall picture small business are still strug-

gling. When notified of a recent news piece from another media outlet featuring small business owners who shared their fears, and concerns, Guerrero, who is a business owner himself, agreed. "The small businesses, we're all struggling."

He concedes that many businesses lost money during the COVID-19 pandemic, but now with the pandemic already over, they still feel its remaining effects on the economy.

"For us, it still feels like we're in a pandemic. ...I mean, don't get me wrong. We feel safe here. Many of us are no longer afraid of the virus. Most people are not worried about their health status in relation to COVID-19, but our businesses are sick, you know. They are not healthy. When

return a phone message.

Residents of U.S. territories vote in primaries but do not have representation in the Electoral College.

American Samoa has

been the site of quixotic victories before. During the 2020 Democratic primaries, billionaire Michael Bloomberg's only win came in the territory.

### GONZALES

*From page 1*

election for the CNMI's next U.S. delegate.

Others who have already announced their candidacies for the same post are Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) and former Commonwealth Ports Authority chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds.

The news release stated that Gonzales, whose passion is fighting for the rights of NMDs, "will be sharing his lifelong passion and record of public service, community advocacy and leadership in nonprofit organizations in the CNMI" during his announcement on March 17, which will be streamed live on radio, Facebook, and other media platforms.

### BLAISE

*From page 1*

Chi and IPI counsel, and other parties.

The CCC board temporarily reappointed Yeom as executive director last Dec. 28, but because of the CCC's limited funding, that re-appointment

was only good for two months or until the end of February 2024. It was not immediately learned if his appointment will be renewed.

Yeom informed the CCC board members during the board's monthly meeting last week that they will be losing Blaise's services, just as the CCC will be wrapping up its scheduled revocation hearing for IPI.

Blaise's last day with the OAG is this week, but she said her last day with the CCC would be last Wednesday or the following day.

"I'm moving back home," said the lawyer, who is from the U.S. mainland.

Blaise started serving as CCC legal counsel after Michael Ernest resigned from the OAG in July 2021.

Blaise said she appreciates working with the CCC board and staff and the things that they have accomplished together. "And I will be watching from afar. Something will eventually be resolved and it's a really nice ride here," she said.

CCC commissioner Ramon M. Dela Cruz praised Blaise "for a job well done" in representing the commission's interest and the people of the Commonwealth.

"We wish you luck on

Gonzales was a grant writer for over two decades in the CNMI executive and legislative branches and with U.S. federal departments and U.S. Congress as former chief of staff of two prior gubernatorial administrations.

Gonzales will also share his achievements, his vision, and plans for the CNMI should he be elected delegate this November.

He says he wants to build on the work of the CNMI's current delegate to work on pressing issues unique to the CNMI.

The CNMI's incumbent delegate is Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP). He won't be running for re-election.

For those interested in tuning in, the livestream will air at around 11am on March 17.

your next journey. You know, it's sad when we see people who have become a part of the family move away. And you're welcome to come back one day when you miss the CNMI," Dela Cruz said.

CCC commissioner Martin T. Mendiola said it's been a pleasure working with Blaise.

"You've done an exceptional job," said Mendiola, adding that, as Yeom has noted, the CCC won many court battles against IPI because of Blaise and the teamwork they worked on.

"And we were all the way through well-represented," Mendiola added.

Yeom said he and Blaise spent countless hours, even on weekends, discussing many different legal strategies on the settlement talks and other court matters involving IPI.

Yeom said he does not know who will replace Blaise as counsel for the CCC.

Blaise said it's definitely been a pleasure working with Yeom and that they indeed spent countless hours on the phone, trying to come up with legal strategies to try to fight these battles that have won.

"I'm glad that we're here [revocation hearing] now. I'm sure that the AG's Office will appoint someone that is just as passionate and informed as I've been," she said.

CCC commissioner Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero, who joined the meeting via video conference, also extended his appreciation to Blaise for all her hard work during the arbitration hearing and various district court appearances involving IPI.



## NMC's Phi Theta Kappa Chapter receives REACH award for 5th consecutive year

The Beta Lambda Psi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at Northern Marianas College has been named a recipient of the REACH Rewards program for the fifth year in a row. The recognition is part of PTK's REACH Rewards program, which celebrates and rewards Phi Theta Kappa chapters excelling in membership development by achieving exceptionally high rates of membership acceptance in the 2023 calendar year.

"We are thrilled to be recognized for our hard work and dedication to increasing awareness about Phi Theta Kappa and its benefits," chapter advisor Kaelani Demapan said. "Membership in PTK provides our students with the opportunity to enhance their college experience and develop leadership skills that will benefit them throughout their lives."

"A huge shout out to our advisors—Malyssa Castro, Maia Pangilinan, and Jamin Dela Cruz—and current PTK officers—president MaryJo Camacho, vice president Sharon Paek, Treasurer Rumina Litulumar, Membership secretary Hannah Agulto, and Recording and Public Relations secretary Ejay Aguirre—for encouraging their peers to join PTK," Demapan said.

When asked about her experience in PTK, Chapter president Camacho said, "It is truly an honor to be a part of PTK as it has been an invaluable aspect of my college experience, shaping not only my academic journey but also my personal growth. Through PTK, I've been provided with valuable leadership experiences, networking opportunities, and service projects. I am also extremely grateful for the support and mentorship that I've received from our PTK advisors, officers and fellow members. I'm proud to be

a part of this prestigious organization that is committed to fostering academic excellence, leadership development, and service to others. Congratulations, once again, to the NMC Beta Lambda Psi Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society for receiving the REACH award for its fifth consecutive year!"

The chapter earned six graduation stoles as part of the REACH Rewards program, which aims to increase membership acceptance rates and provides access to PTK

benefits to as many students as possible.

In an email to NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Dr. Lynn Tincher-Ladner, president and CEO of Phi Theta Kappa, said, "Congratulations and thank you for your support in furthering Phi Theta Kappa's mission of providing recognition and opportunity to students on your campus. The dedication of both you and your chapter advisors to enhancing the college experience and the lives of

The members of the Beta Lambda Psi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at Northern Marianas College.

students is truly appreciated and more important than ever before."

Established by Missouri two-year college presidents in 1918, the PTK Honor Society serves to recognize and encourage the academic achievement of two-year college students and provide opportunities for individual growth and development through honors, leadership, and service programming.

For more information, please contact [ptk@marianas.edu](mailto:ptk@marianas.edu). (PR)



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## COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION


**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**CUC-RFP-24-011**  
**DEBT COLLECTION LEGAL SERVICES**

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified and experienced entities for Debt Collection Legal Services.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one RFP package set. Prospective Entities must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply.

**One (1) original and five (5) hard copies** of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-RFP-24-011, Debt Collection Legal Services" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 A.M.(ChST) on March 15, 2024**. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 23, 2024**, to Manny Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator via email address [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Bettina G. Terlaje, CUC's Chief of Administration via email [betty.terlaje@cucgov.org](mailto:betty.terlaje@cucgov.org) and Marcela Tenorio, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address [marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org](mailto:marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE  
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN  
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION  
Office of the Executive Director
**INVITATION FOR BIDS**  
**CUC-IFB-24-020**
**SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF LUBE  
OILS FOR POWER GENERATION**  
**(CUC SAIPAN, TINIAN, ROTA)**

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the supply and delivery of engine lubricating oils for CUC Power Generation facilities on Saipan, Tinian and Rota.

The IFB Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set. The IFB package consisting of the specifications and scope-of-service will be provided via email to the registered email ID. Prospective bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

**One (1) original and five (5) hard copies**, in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-24-020, Supply & Delivery of Lube Oils for Power Generation" to the **CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950**, no later than **March 11, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. An electronic copy should also be emailed to Marcela Tenorio via email, [marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org](mailto:marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org). Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

All Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility for any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements during the Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, pay any cost incurred in preparing the bid under this request, procure or contract for services. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contract may be subject to the approval of CPUC and will not be effective until receipt of such approval.

All responses to this IFB should consider all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the proponent's obligation upon award of a contract. Successful proponents must submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 5, 2024** to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC Power Generation Manager via email [richard.cano@cucgov.org](mailto:richard.cano@cucgov.org), and Marcela Tenorio, email address [marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org](mailto:marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in said bid, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE  
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN, JR.  
Purchasing Administrator

# GCC completes 100kW PV system installation



GCC

Guam Community College is proud to announce the successful completion of a 100-kilowatt photovoltaic system installation at the campus's Buildings A and C, bringing the campus' renewable energy capacity to 260kW. This significant achievement marks a major milestone in GCC's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. The project was completed at the beginning of February.

The new PV system is projected to save approximately \$5,000 monthly on GCC's energy costs, providing substantial cost-savings for the college. In addition to the financial benefits, the system will also have a positive impact on the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 10.4 metric tons.

The project exemplifies

Guam Community College's new 100-kilowatt photovoltaic system is projected to save approximately \$5,000 monthly on GCC's energy costs.

GCC's dedication to embracing renewable energy solutions and reducing its carbon footprint. By harnessing the power of solar energy, GCC is not only advancing its sustainability goals but also setting an example for our community through our ongoing commitment to innovation, sustainability, and responsible resource management.

As GCC celebrates this

milestone, it looks forward to continuing its efforts to promote sustainability, inspire change, and create a brighter, more sustainable future for Guam and beyond.

The project was funded by the Department of the Interior's Empowering Insular Communities Grant and was awarded to Pacific Solar and Photovoltaics in February 2023 and cost \$394,000. (PR)

## USDA FNS' Western Regional Office recognizes Nat'l School Breakfast Week

**SAN FRANCISCO, California**—The Western Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service recognizes National School Breakfast Week during March 4-8. This year's national theme is Surf's Up with School Breakfast, highlighting the importance of school breakfast and its value in improving children's health and educational outcomes.

According to studies, children who eat breakfast also have improved moods and increased alertness through-

out the morning. Additionally, students who participate in the School Breakfast Program eat a breakfast of higher nutritional quality than students who eat breakfast elsewhere.

"Let's work together this week to uplift all the nutritious breakfasts schools are serving across the country, and the creative work schools are doing to provide students with nutritious and delicious food," said USDA FNS Western regional administrator Jesus Mendoza Jr. "Schools are doing great things to feature

fruits and vegetables, locally sourced foods, and foods with less added sugars."

The Western Region (Alaska, American Samoa, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, and Washington) served school breakfast to over 2.3 million children every school day in school year 2022-2023. Nationally, the School Breakfast Program provides school breakfast to nearly 15 million children in more than 91,000 schools.

USDA's FNS works to end hunger and improve food and nutrition security through a suite of 16 nutrition assistance programs, such as the school breakfast and lunch programs, WIC and SNAP. Together, these programs serve one in four Americans over the course of a year, promoting consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, and affordable food essential to optimal health and well-being. FNS also provides science-based nutrition recommendations through the co-development of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. FNS's report, "Leveraging the White House Conference to Promote and Elevate Nutrition Security: The Role of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service," highlights ways the agency will support the Biden-Harris Administration's National Strategy, released in conjunction with the historic White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health in September 2022. To learn more about FNS, visit [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov) and follow @USDANutrition. (PR)

ANTONIO S. BORJA, JAMES M. MENDOLA, HENRY H. SAN NICOLAS  
Chairman Vice Chairman Member  
DONALD M. HOFSCHEIDER, CHARLES M. LIZAMA  
Member Executive Director

**TINIAN CASINO GAMING  
CONTROL COMMISSION**

Municipality of Tinian and Aguijan  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGC) hereby gives notice that it will hold its Regular Meeting, on Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at the TCGC Conference Room.

**AGENDA**
**I. PRELIMINARY**

- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda
- d. Adoption of Minutes
- 1. February 7, 2024—Regular Meeting

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS<sup>1</sup>**
**III. REPORTS**

- a. Chair's Report
- b. Executive Director's Report

**IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a. Status Update of Bridge Investment Group/Tinian Diamond Casino

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. ED Recommendation No. 2024-03

**VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION<sup>2</sup>**
**VII. OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS**
**VIII. MISCELLANEOUS AND  
ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**
**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ., F-0122  
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SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950  
TEL: (670) 234-6547  
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ATTORNEY FOR Petitioner

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN  
MARIANA ISLANDS**

In the Matter of the ] CIVIL ACTION  
Estate of ] NO. 24-0058  
FELIX FLORES FITIAL, ]  
Deceased. ]

**NOTICE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation has filed a Petition for Letters of Administration upon the Estate of Felix Flores Fitial, deceased; and that the said Petition will be heard by the Court on **THURSDAY, April 4, 2024, at the hour of 10:00 a.m.** of the said day.

NOTICE is also given to all heirs of and persons having claims against the Estate of Felix Flores Fitial, deceased, and to all the persons claiming an interest in said Estate, that they shall file such claims with the Clerk of this Court within sixty (60) days from the first publication of this Notice. Copies of such claims should be provided to Michael A. White, Esq., The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, P.O. Box 5222 CHRB, Saipan, MP 96950, Attorney for Petitioner. All claims not so filed shall be forever barred.

DATED: March 3, 2024

/s/  
JOSEPH N. CAMACHO, Associate Judge

<sup>1</sup> Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes.  
<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

# Tuvalu's new premier says democracy and loyalty are reasons for preferring Taiwan over Beijing



In this photo provided by the Tuvalu government, the newly elected Prime Minister, Feleti Teo, center, front, poses for a photo with his ministers in Funafuti, Tuvalu, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024.

**MELBOURNE, Australia** (AP)—The new prime minister in the Pacific island nation of Tuvalu said on Friday his country shares democratic values with Taiwan and reaffirmed that his government would maintain diplomatic ties with Taipei, ruling out a shift to Beijing.

Prime Minister Feleti Teo spoke to The Associated Press via Zoom, his first interview with international media since his government took office earlier this week.

"Our ties with Taiwan are purely based on democratic principles and they have been very loyal to us," Teo said.

Teo, a 61-year-old first-time lawmaker, and his eight Cabinet ministers were sworn into office on Wednesday, a month after general elections in the strategically significant nation of 11,500 people halfway between Australia and Hawaii.

Election campaign issues included whether Tuvalu should switch its diplomatic allegiance from Taiwan to Beijing. An elected candidate proposed scrapping a treaty, which has yet to be ratified, that would give Australia veto power over any security-related agreement Tuvalu wants to make with any other country, including China.

The new administration announced it would maintain diplomatic ties with the self-governing Taiwan. China has claimed Taiwan since a 1949 split amid civil war.

Teo, a former long-term Tuvaluan public servant and regional bureaucrat, said the question of changing allegiances was "definitely not" an issue for his people.

Teo said he hopes to renegotiate development assistance agreements with Taiwan and that impacts of climate change and sea level rises remain top priorities for his nation of low-lying atolls.

The treaty with Australia, announced by previous Tuvalu Prime Minister Kausea Natano and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in November, offered Tuvaluans an option of resettlement in Australia to escape rising oceans and worsening storms.

Australia would initially allow up to 280 Tuvaluans

to immigrate each year. The treaty would also commit Australia to helping Tuvalu in response to major natural disasters, pandemics and mil-

itary aggression.

But Teo wants Australia to drop a clause that both countries must "mutually agree" on any third-country security agree-



AP  
In this photo provided by the Tuvalu government, the newly elected Prime Minister, Feleti Teo, right, is sworn into office during a ceremony in Funafuti, Tuvalu, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024.

ment that Tuvalu may seek.

Teo said he had been involved in drafting the treaty as a legal consultant for Tuvalu and the original intention had been only for Australia to be informed of such third-party agreements. Australian approval had not been expected.

Teo would not speculate on whether Australia wants veto power to avoid a repeat of the security pact signed between China and the Solomon Islands in 2022 that raised the prospect of a Chinese naval foothold being established in the South Pacific.

Teo said while his government is "certainly behind the broad principle and objectives of the treaty," it still has ways to go. In his view, the treaty would become acceptable if Australia dropped the mutual agreement provision.

"We need to revisit that provision," Teo said. "The general perspective here in Tuvalu is that it might encroach on Tuvalu's sovereignty."

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong's office did not immediately respond to a request or comment on whether further negotiation was possible.

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION**

**INVITATION TO BID  
ITB24-CHCC/PDMP-009**

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE: March 11th, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)**

**"LEASE OF VEHICLE"**

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE ([WWW.CHCC.HEALTH](http://WWW.CHCC.HEALTH)), ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

*/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA*  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

*/S/ CORA P. ADA*  
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

**DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES  
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID  
ITB NO.: ITB24-GOV/OGM-42400052**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 27, 2024 TIME: 09:00 A.M.**

**"OFFICE SPACE LEASE FOR THE OFFICE OF  
GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARINGHOUSE"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARINGHOUSE BY MARCH 15, 2024, TO MR. EPIPHANIO CABRERA JR. VIA EMAIL AT [epi.cabrera@gov.mp](mailto:epi.cabrera@gov.mp)

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAIC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

*/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.*  
ADMINISTRATOR, OGM

*/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.*  
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

**COMMITTEE OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF WORLD WAR II**  
A Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Non-Profit Corporation

**Articles of Dissolution**

I, the undersigned, being authorized representative of the Committee of the Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of World War II (the "Non-Profit Corporation"), a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands corporation, pursuant to the Action and Consent of Board Members without a Meeting contemporaneously executes, do hereby adopt these Articles of Dissolution, pursuant to 4 CMC § 4603:

a. The name of the Non-Profit Corporation is: Committee of the Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of World War II;  
b. The date of dissolution was authorized: February 21, 2024;  
c. The Corporation's Business has been wound up, and the legal existence of the Corporation has been terminated.

*/s/*  
**DIEGO T. BENAVENTE**  
Authorized Representative  
COMMITTEE OF THE COMMEMORATION  
OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
WORLD WAR II

*/s/*  
**MARIAN ALDAN-PIERCE**  
Authorized Representative  
CCA OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF WORLD WAR II

**USDA**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA-NASS), in collaboration with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division (DOC-CSD) will begin visits in mid-March 2024 to all farms on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian to conduct the CNMI 2023 Census of Agriculture data collection.

**Response to the Census of Agriculture is required by Federal Law, under Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113 and as well as the CNMI 1990 Statistical Act Public Law 7-35.**

# Opinion

## Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 48

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,  
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI  
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

## EDITORIAL

### Ruth Gottesman's genius gift: The end of tuition at Albert Einstein College of Medicine

The name Einstein has long been synonymous with genius, but it goes back to a man and his equation,  $E = mc^2$ . In his lifetime, Albert Einstein was the world's most famous man and most famous Jew and most famous refugee (the last two being connected, as he had to flee his native Germany when the Nazis took power in 1933). Time magazine selected him as the Person of the Century. He even has a part in the film "Oppenheimer."

But with Einstein's fame and worldwide acclaim as a man of science, he only bestowed his name to one institution, a medical school in the Bronx, in 1953, two years before he died.

It was to be a different kind of med school, open to all students and faculty, regardless of race and religion, breaking with the shameful legacy of limiting Jews and other "undesirables" from medical schools. Before Einstein, there was Middlesex University in Massachusetts, which did not bar students. Yet Middlesex failed and its campus was taken over by Brandeis University (which doesn't have a med school).

So it was tried again in New York. Founded under the auspices of a Jewish institution, Yeshiva University, the Albert Einstein College of Medicine was nonsectarian from its start and the great physicist freely gave his name.

In recent years, Einstein has been part of Montefiore Medical Center, the largest employer in the Bronx.

And now, the legacy of Einstein's mission of being open to all has expanded with an extraordinary gift of \$1 billion by Ruth Gottesman, who served on the faculty for more than 50 years and is chair of the board.

The money, the largest donation ever to a medical school, will make Einstein forever tuition-free. The current tuition of \$60,000 a year, over four years, has meant that young doctors, MDs and PhDs, were starting their careers with a quarter million dollars in debt. No more. The lectures and the labs will be free to all students.

Gottesman, who is 93, is the widow of investor Sandy Gottesman. In 1964, he founded the Wall Street firm First Manhattan and teamed up with Warren Buffet and his Berkshire Hathaway. At around the same time, Ruth Gottesman, who holds a doctorate in education, joined Einstein's Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center and became a clinical professor of pediatrics, focusing on learning disabilities.

Sandy and Ruth both flourished in their pursuits for decades. He died two years ago at age 96, leaving her a bequest of \$1 billion to use as she saw fit. She decided to give the mountain of money to Einstein.

With such an enormous gift would normally come the donor's name on the door, but she refused and even was reluctant to have her gift be public. Indeed, a stipulation of the gift is that Einstein remain the med school's name.

See RUTH on Page 9



### Arizona Republicans want to give citizens license to shoot migrants

Arizona Republicans produced legislation last week that would legalize shooting and killing trespassers on private land. Essentially, they took an existing law that allows someone to shoot a home invader and extended it outside to the property line—even if the property extends for hundreds of acres.

The bill, which passed the House and moved to the Arizona Senate, makes no specific mention of migrants. But everyone knows what the legislation is really about. A Feb. 27 headline in Axios got right to the point: "Arizona GOP advances bill legalizing killing undocumented migrants on suspicion of trespassing."

If you want to see how the law would work in practice, you can look to rural New York, where a carload of young people looking for a friend's house pulled into the wrong driveway last year. One of them didn't make it out alive. The owner of the property, Kevin Monahan, addled by fear, shot 20-year-old Kaylin Gillis dead. Monahan testified that he had felt "under siege" by the appearance of cars and a motorcycle at the end of his driveway. Two shotgun blasts, one fatal, were his response.

For Arizona Republicans, Monahan seems to have had cause to kill—especially if the victims belong to a disfavored class. An Arizona rancher is awaiting trial for shooting at a group of unarmed migrants who were crossing his 170-acre ranch. One of the migrants was killed. Apparently, Republican lawmakers there want to encourage more such shootings.

The primary source, and cheerleader, of this aggression masquerading as law isn't hard to identify. He was campaigning at the Texas border this week.

Former President Donald Trump lies constantly, but he particularly seems to relish lying about immigrants. "Now, the United States is being overrun by the Biden migrant crime," Trump said Thursday in Texas, where he pursued a double-barreled agenda of generating hatred of migrants and of President Joe Biden. "It's a new form of vicious violation to our country."

That's right, a nation founded by immigrants, where descendants of the original natives currently represent less than 2% of the population, is right now experiencing a "new form" of "migrant crime." In reality, there continues to be no surge in crime linked to migrants, just as there was no surge when Trump, seeking political gain, highlighted crimes committed by migrants in the past. Violent crime in the US spiked in 2020, Trump's final year in office, and remained high in 2021. It has declined since. An NBC News investigation found that crime is also down in cities that are receiving high numbers of migrants transported from Texas.

**By FRANCIS WILKINSON**  
Bloomberg Opinion

Francis Wilkinson is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering US politics and policy. Previously, he was executive editor for the Week and a writer for Rolling Stone.



Sometimes Trump utters ahistorical nonsense because he is an ignorant man with no grasp of history. But his comments about migrants, delivered in his distinctive Queens patois, itself the product of mixing Dutch, English, Irish, Jewish, Italian, Puerto Rican and other immigrant tongues, are always dishonest with purpose.

The recent murder of Laken Riley in Georgia is a case in point. The body of the 22-year-old nursing student was found in a wooded area at the University of Georgia in Athens. She'd been reporting missing by her roommate after failing to return from a morning run.

On average, 70 women are shot and killed by intimate partners every month. Authorities say Riley and her alleged killer didn't know each other. But the man charged, 26-year-old Jose Antonio Ibarra, is an undocumented migrant from Venezuela, so the crime is useful to the White nationalist cause. "Crooked Joe Biden's Border INVASION is destroying our country and killing our citizens!" Trump wrote on social media in reaction to Riley's murder.

Arizona legislators essentially have taken Trump's crayon scrawl—INVASION—and repackaged it as legislation. It's part of a campaign to justify previously unjustifiable violence outside the home. Like Stand Your Ground laws, the Arizona legislation would enable a shooter to claim that any killing was a response to fear. The dead party would, of course, be unable to dispute the claim.

Violence, like anti-migrant hysteria, is central to the White nationalist cause, which views migration as "invasion" and brown-skinned migrants as targets for lethal force. Texas Governor Greg Abbott treats migrants—including children—as an invading army.

Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs, a Democrat, will almost certainly veto the Arizona shooting-gallery legislation if it reaches her desk. But the rage, fear, and aggression that inspired it will persist. Too many people enjoy it, and profit by it, for it to stop now.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published.

The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to [editor@saipantribune.com](mailto:editor@saipantribune.com); or through our website at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com).

## 4 ways the US should help Ukraine right now

**D**onald Trump is helping Vladimir Putin defeat Ukraine. Right now, as you read this.

To stop that from happening, President Joe Biden must do an end run around Congress—where Trump and his MAGA clique have cowed House Speaker Mike Johnson into blocking a vote on vital military aid for Ukraine.

Biden still has the power to get some critical aid to Kyiv and prevent a MAGA sellout to Putin that will have ugly, long-term security consequences for America. But the White House can only counter the appeasers if Biden finally summons the political will to help Ukraine win.

Today, Trump and Putin hold the advantage.

With U.S. military funding cut off, Ukraine recently lost the town of Avdiivka to Russia because frontline soldiers ran out of artillery shells and bullets.

Our European allies—who already give twice as much aid to Ukraine as the U.S. does—are trying to rev up their military production capacity to compensate. They need to do much better, but they can't do this fast enough or big enough to make up for the U.S. abdication. Meantime, Russia is boosting its military production with substantial help from Iran and North Korea.

Trump has long made his admiration of Putin clear, and his disdain for Ukraine clearer—he still resents Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for refusing to dig up fake dirt on Biden in 2019.

That makes urgent White House action even more imperative before the November elections. If Trump should win, he insists he will settle the Ukraine war in 24 hours in Moscow, which means pressing Kyiv to surrender to Putin's demands.

Last month, it seemed that Democrats might be able to pull a parliamentary maneuver to do an end run around Johnson—if they could get only four Republicans to join them. But now, continued MAGA haggling over efforts to prevent a government shutdown means any movement on Ukraine could be delayed for weeks.

Each day that passes without further U.S. aid encourages Putin to expand his ambitions—and leads directly to more Ukrainian deaths.

Unless, that is, the White House takes immediate steps to sustain Ukraine in the near term while pushing harder for congressional funding. This will help enable Kyiv to achieve military progress this year.

Here are four steps Biden must take:

### Use presidential authority to provide weapons

Much of U.S. military aid to Ukraine relies on presidential drawdown authority, known as PDA, meaning Biden can immediately send Kyiv weapons from existing stocks. Military aid appropriations then go to replace these weapons, often with newer models. (Contrary to MAGA misinformation, most of the military aid money for Ukraine stays in the U.S. and funds manufacturing jobs for U.S. workers.)

Biden still has PDA access to around \$4.2 billion worth of weapons but stopped sending them in late December. The given reason: The halt to Ukraine aid means there is no money for the Pentagon to replace the diminished stocks.

Strategically, this makes no sense. We have an \$850 billion-plus annual defense budget. Russian aggression is the most urgent security threat the United States faces. And the Pentagon can't wait for reimbursement of \$4 billion that will help block Putin from scoring more gains in Ukraine?

### Send needed ATACMS

ATACMS are long-range missiles with a powerful single warhead that can travel 300 kilometers.

“ATACMS are not a silver bullet, but would make a tremendous difference,” says retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, former commander of the United States Army Europe. “They would allow Ukraine to destroy every Russian logistics base and headquarters inside occupied Ukrainian territory, with precision. Nowhere would be safe for the Russians. It would neutralize their advantage,” in terms of artillery and man power.

Ukraine has already had great success with French and British long-range missiles in destroying Russian ships in the Black Sea, but their numbers are limited, and the U.S. missiles are more powerful. Sending ATACMS would prod Germany to add its own Taurus missiles. It could enable Ukraine to take down the Kerch Bridge and make Russia's presence in the occupied Crimea Peninsula untenable.

This is the best opportunity to put Putin on the back foot and persuade him that his war can't be won.

None of the current White House excuses for withholding ATACMS holds water. The Pentagon has hundreds of them in

**By TRUDY RUBIN**

The Philadelphia Inquirer



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stock and is already replacing them with next-generation Precision Strike Missiles. What is the White House waiting for?

### Rev up production

Increase U.S. industrial production of ammunition and weaponry in 2024, as Europe is doing, to help Ukraine and better prepare for future Russian (or Chinese) aggression. In the meantime, scour current U.S. stocks for more immediate ammo aid, including supplies of cluster munitions the Pentagon no longer uses.

### Clarify why helping Ukraine helps America

Explain directly to the American people why more military aid for Ukraine is crucial for U.S. security.

First off, MAGA calls for Ukraine to negotiate now with Putin are a pipe dream. “Anybody who thinks you can negotiate in good faith with Russia has never read a history book,” Hodges told me. Putin has blatantly broken every past deal Russia made with Ukraine, and has made publicly clear he wants to turn the country into a puppet colony—or destroy it.

Moreover, if the Kremlin crushes Ukraine, Putin has also made clear his desire to undermine or bite off chunks of NATO member states—potentially provoking a wider war.

Meantime, the world is watching whether the United States of Trumpism is ready to let an aggressive dictator break all post-World War II rules in Europe by brutally annexing a neighboring nation. If so, violent challenges to the United States on land, sea, and space will multiply exponentially.

This does not have to happen if Biden pushes back forcefully.

“Hopefully we will rediscover our strategic backbone,” Hodges told me. Hopefully in time to prevent MAGA appeasers from handing Putin a victory in 2024.

## Maintaining a democracy is not a spectator sport

**M**artin Niemoller, a German Lutheran pastor, composed a post-World War II confessional titled “First they came ...” The four-line composition explains, in straight-forward language, how the Nazis rose to power by methodically silencing German intellectuals and clergy.

The best known version of the prose is housed in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum:

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

Let's be frank. Since the Tea Party's founding in 2009, several groups—on their own accord and/or in conjunction with political parties, biased think tanks, political action committees and politicians—are trying to silence you and me via multiple measures. If Niemoller's 1946 verse reflected America in 2024, it might read:

First they came to restrict women's reproductive rights and the rights of LGBTQIA, transgender youth, people with mental health issues, the physically disabled and the homeless, and I did not speak out—because I decided the issues are too complex to handle.

Then they came to ban books and dissing public education, and I did not speak out—because I don't have kids in school.

Then they came to denounce Black Lives Matter and people from other countries while accepting white nationalism and evangelical Christian nationalism, and I did not speak out—because I didn't know how to get involved.

Then they came to disrespect diversity, equity, inclusion and sexual harassment claims, and I did not speak out—because I'm only one person.

Then they came to praise the autocratic leaders of Russia, China,

North Korea, Hungary and Argentina, and I did not speak out—because I didn't know who to express my concerns to.

Then they came to push isolationism, dismantle America's allies and throw global free trade, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, NATO and the United Nations under the bus, and I did not speak out—because I'm not in a leadership position.

Then they came to reduce funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, Social Security and Medicare, and I did not speak out—because I'm too busy working two jobs to make ends meet.

Then they came to eliminate eminent domain and a total ban on asylum immigration laws rather than pass needed comprehensive immigration reform despite 98% of Americans being of immigrant descent, and I did not speak out—because my elected representatives are also ignoring the issues.

Then they came to ridicule and to defund the Department of Justice, IRS, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Transportation and Department of Defense, and I did not speak out—because that's for politicians and not me to resolve.

Then they came to free the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrectionists, eradicating votes of fellow citizens, threatening the lives of volunteer election workers, identifying legal judicial actions as witch-hunts, claiming presidential immunity reigns supreme, and I did not speak out—because I decided that's up to the courts to decide.

Then they came to ignore bipartisanship, the \$34 trillion national debt, \$1.7 trillion federal deficit, aid to Ukraine and climate change, and I did not speak out—because I was afraid to take a stance against my political party's wishes.

Then they came to impose politically favored gerrymandering, the unification of church and state, hands-off for any type of reasonable gun control legislation and re-electing politicians who put their party before the people and claim to be your “venge and retribution” candidate, and I did not speak out—be-

**By STEVE CORBIN**

The Fulcrum



Steve Corbin is professor emeritus of marketing at the University of Northern Iowa.

cause I'm getting tired of political shenanigans.

Then they came to realize that “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men [and women] to do nothing” and that knowing democracy is not a spectator sport, and vowed to vote on Nov. 5 so America would not revert to dictatorial-authoritarian control—because, if not, “Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

## RUTH

From page 8

And so the promise that Albert Einstein College of Medicine began with is now fully realized. Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Black, white, Hispanic, Asian; people of all types are welcome as students to learn and now there is no financial barrier. The only criteria is that the applicant be someone who will become a good doctor, a compassionate and learned healer for the betterment of all of humanity.

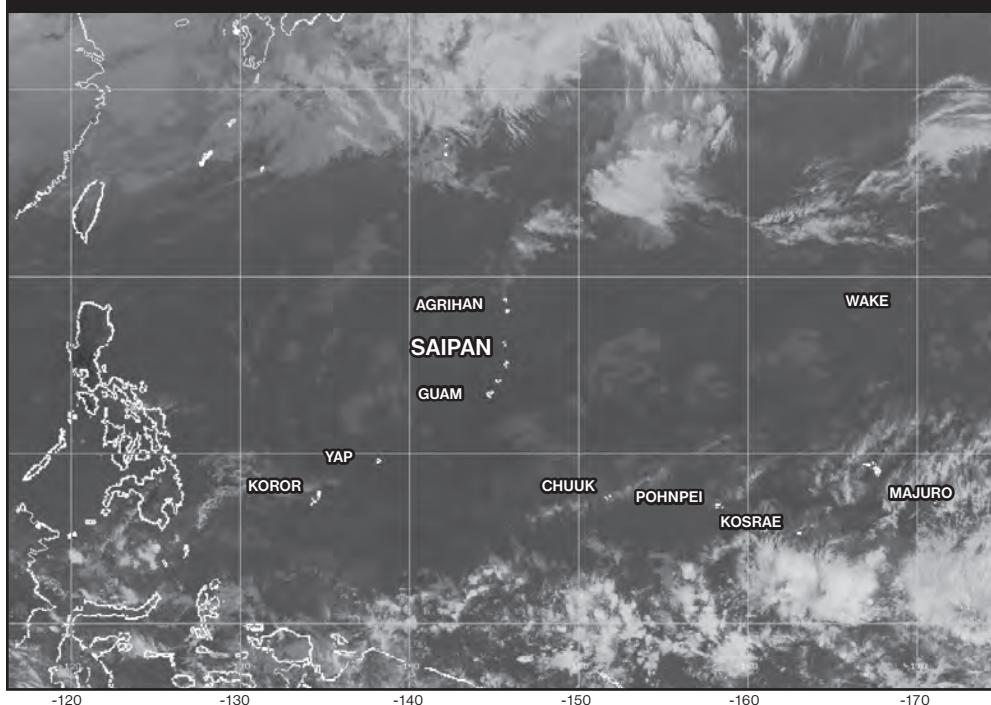
Ruth Gottesman found the perfect place for the money.

# The Weather

## 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
86 75°	86 75°	86 75°	86 75°	86 75°

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:55 AM WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

The latest analysis shows seas of 6 to 7 feet located across Guam and the CNMI, with just a few showers passing by. The water temperature is 81 degrees at the Tanapag buoy.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA		
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	85° / 76°
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°
Pohnpei	Windy	86° / 79°
Kosrae	Windy	86° / 79°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:30 AM	6:25 PM
Friday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM
Sunday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM
Monday	6:27 AM	6:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	3:44 AM	3:11 PM	-
Friday	4:38 AM	4:16 PM	-
Saturday	5:28 AM	5:20 PM	-
Sunday	6:15 AM	6:21 PM	-
Monday	6:58 AM	7:22 PM	-

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## AROUND THE GLOBE

		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	72° / 63°
Beijing	Sunny	52° / 30°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	70° / 64°
Honolulu	Showers	80° / 69°
London	Showers	48° / 36°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	74° / 53°
Manila	Mostly Sunny	91° / 75°
Melbourne	Rain	70° / 61°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	81° / 74°
New York	Mostly Sunny	56° / 39°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	48° / 39°
Paris	Showers	48° / 43°
Busan	Sunny	52° / 37°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	61° / 39°
Salem	Rain	60° / 52°
San Francisco	Sunny	63° / 48°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	46° / 25°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	55° / 41°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	62° / 41°

## TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET

6:33 AM	High Tide	1.71
11:33 AM	Low Tide	1.23
4:17 PM	High Tide	1.73
11:49 PM	Low Tide	-0.41

**SUBSCRIPTION** Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2024

DEPARTURES					ARRIVALS				
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)					GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN				
UA076 9:50AM 10:35AM Daily					UA174 8:00AM 8:45AM Daily				
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)					NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN				
UA824 7:05AM 9:45AM 1, 3, 5					UA825 9:25PM 2:00AM+1 2, 4, 7				
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)					MANILA (MNL)-GUAM				
PR 111 5:55AM 7:55AM Daily					UA189 00:40AM 6:30AM 3, 6				
UA193 7:50PM 11:50PM 2, 5 via Palau					PR110 10:05PM 3:55AM+1 Daily				
UA183 7:55PM 9:50PM Daily					UA192 10:40PM 6:30AM+1 2, 5 via Palau				
7C3403/2305 4:40AM 10:20PM Daily					UA184 10:55PM 4:45AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7				
UA076/183 9:50AM 9:50PM Daily via Guam					UA189/174 00:40AM 8:45AM+1 3, 6 via Guam				
UA076/193 9:50AM 11:50PM 2, 5 via Guam, Palau					UA192/174 10:40PM 8:45AM+1 2, 5 via Palau, Guam				
7C2306/3406 11:15PM 3:30PM+1 Daily					UA184/174 10:55PM 8:45AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam				
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)					7C3406 10:10AM 3:30PM Daily				
TW308 2:15AM 6:10AM Daily					TW307 7:45PM 1:15AM+1 Daily				
7C3403 4:40AM 8:35AM Daily					7C3404 10:15PM 3:35AM+1 Daily				
7C3405 4:35PM 8:25PM Daily					7C3462 08:00AM 1:30PM Daily Feb 7-16 only				

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, TW'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday

# Business

## Guam Chamber of Commerce unveils new centennial look



**HAGĀTÑA, Guam**—The Guam Chamber of Commerce is turning 100 this year and kicked off its Centennial Anniversary during its packed general membership meeting on Feb. 28 at the Guam Hilton Resort and Spa.

In his welcome speech, Ernie Galito, chairman of the board of directors for the Guam Chamber of Commerce, unveiled the Chamber's new centennial logo and theme that set the tone for the year of festivities.

Galito shared the story of the Centennial branding direction. He said, "The design of our centennial logo is rooted in two key ideas: celebrating 100 years of fostering a healthy business environment and striving for an even brighter future for Guam. It also incorporates our longstanding logo of concentric circles representing the GCOC initials with a latte stone symbolizing respect for the Chamorro culture and heritage. The new color scheme of blue and gold represents the deep Pacific blues and our enduring foundation and the rising sun that signifies our optimism for the future."

As a pivotal year for the Chamber, the organization felt it was the ideal time to update its tagline, "Partners in Progress," to emphasize its enduring commitment to progress, both in the present and for future generations.

"Our theme this year is 'Progress Now and Forever,' which highlights 100 years of progress that the business community has achieved for Guam while reconfirming our ongoing commitment to improving the quality of life through innovation and economic development," said Galito.

"We will be sharing more of our outlook throughout the year, and we invite the community to join us in this celebration. All businesses and young entrepre-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lt. Gov. Joshua F. Tenorio served as the Guam Chamber of Commerce's guest speaker during its general membership meeting on Feb. 28 at the Guam Hilton Resort and Spa. The meeting also served as the kick-off to the Chamber's centennial anniversary celebrations.

neurs are encouraged to become members this year, as we have many exciting initiatives and events planned."

The Chamber announced two upcoming events: the 26th Annual Guam Chamber of Commerce Amateur Golf Tournament on March 20 and the Centennial Gala in May. The Chamber will use each event to celebrate a century of unwavering dedication to Guam's business community and pay tribute to countless individuals and organizations who have championed economic growth and prosperity throughout the island's history.

"The Guam Chamber of Commerce has been a constant presence, advocating for policies that empower businesses of all sizes to thrive. We are incredibly grateful for the enduring support of our members and associate members, especially those who have been with us for decades," the chairman added.

### Lt. Gov. Tenorio addresses members

Lt. Gov. Joshua F. Tenorio began his address by thanking the Chamber's directors, leadership team, committees, and mem-

bers for their partnership and congratulated local businesses celebrating impressive milestones in 2024.

He said, "Many of your organizations have seen Guam through its own milestones and challenges. During the course of history, this organization played pivotal roles in the establishment of democracy and civilian government; recovering Guam after World War II; and restoring Guam after numerous typhoons and calamities. This organization has been key to shepherding Guam's economy during both periods of dramatic growth and those of extreme challenges, often tied to external forces and things beyond any one man's control."

The lieutenant governor recognized the business community's efforts in influencing the "development of disaster-related programs by the government to stabilize business operations and bring businesses forward to prepare for growth and expansion" and who continue to play active roles in economic diversity.

Some of the key topics he addressed included building permits and licensing, which are of great interest to the Chamber in 2024.

In his speech, Tenorio said, "I chose to spend a considerable amount of time pushing for the improvement of Guam's cumbersome and oftentimes confusing building permit and business license programs. Having spent a considerable amount of time both in the private sector or working on public capital improvement projects, I've had my share of experiences and observations. I also spent a lot of time listening to many of the members in this room."

Tenorio announced that the administration is working to reduce the traffic to the building permit center by modernizing and digitizing permit applications, which he expects to see "rapid improvements." In addition, he also expects the completion of the Business Licensing and Permitting Task Force's recommendations that also include improving the customer experience and expectations for permitting and expanding the methods and resources of permitting agencies for timely review and inspection.

He said, "This is such a game changer for permitting and licensing as it will enable concurrent review of all applications; customer viewing of agency progress; and contain

adequate information for owners and developers as a way to monitor and understand the interplay between the government and the contractor."

Galito added, "We thank Lt. Gov. Tenorio for being our guest speaker today. Our members appreciated his insight on the many topics vital to the success of their businesses. We agree with

the lieutenant governor that Guam needs long-term system change in the business licensing and permitting processes, and we look forward to more dialogue and progress that will improve development and investments in Guam."

### About the Guam Chamber of Commerce

The Guam Chamber of Commerce is Guam's most established business organization whose members are united in their desire to improve business and build a better social and economic community in Guam. Established in 1924, the Chamber is a nonprofit voluntary association of more than 400 business and professional individuals and firms.

The Chamber works to advocate for the interests of all Guam businesses by addressing and enhancing opportunities to grow the economy and supports responsible legislation that positively impacts businesses and their employees. The Chamber is celebrating its centennial anniversary throughout 2024 and invites all businesses to become members and join them in making a positive difference in Guam's future. (PR)

## Biden admin would cap credit card late fees at \$8, part of campaign vs. junk fees

**WASHINGTON (AP)** The Biden administration announced a rule Tuesday to cap all credit card late fees, the latest effort in the White House push to end what it has called junk fees and a move that regulators say will save Americans up to \$10 billion a year.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's new regulations will set a ceiling of \$8 for most credit card late fees or require banks to show why they should charge more than \$8 for such a fee.

The rule would bring the average credit card late fee down from \$32. The bureau estimates banks brought in roughly \$14 billion in credit card late fees a year.

President Joe Biden highlighted the proposal along with other efforts to reduce costs to Americans at a meeting of his competition council on Tuesday. The Democratic president also said he's forming a new strike force to crack down on illegal and unfair pricing on things like groceries, prescription drugs, health care, housing and financial services.

Biden said at the start of the council meeting that the current late fees are generating five times more money than what it

costs credit card companies to collect late payments.

"They're padding their profit margins and charging hard-working Americans more," Biden said. "It's a lot of money."

The president also noted that companies are effectively raising prices by putting fewer potato chips in the bags sold at grocery stores. Even the "Sesame Street" character Cookie Monster has noticed so-called "shrinkflation" by saying on social media that he's paying more for fewer cookies, Biden said.

The strike force will be led by the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission, according to a White House statement.

The Biden administration has portrayed the White House Competition Council as a way to save people money and promote greater competition within the U.S. economy.

The White House Council of Economic Advisers produced an analysis indicating that the Biden administration's efforts overall will eliminate \$20 billion in annual junk fees. The analysis found that consumers pay about \$90 billion a year in junk fees, including for concerts, apartment rentals and auto dealers.

## Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, Threads logins restored after widespread outage

A technical issue caused widespread login issues for a few hours across Meta's Facebook, Instagram, Threads and Messenger platforms Tuesday.

Andy Stone, Meta's head of communications, acknowledged the issues on X, formerly known as Twitter, and said the company "resolved the issue as quickly as possible for everyone who was impacted, and we apologize

for any inconvenience."

Users reported being locked out of their Facebook accounts and feeds on the platform as well as Threads and Instagram were not refreshing. WhatsApp, which is also owned by Meta, appeared unaffected.

A senior official with the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency told reporters Tuesday that the agency was "not aware of

any specific election nexus nor any specific malicious cyberactivity nexus to the outage."

The outage comes just ahead of Thursday's deadline for Big Tech companies to comply with the European Union's new Digital Markets Act.

To comply, Meta is making changes, like allowing users to separate their Facebook and Instagram accounts so personal information can't be combined to target them

with online ads. It's not clear whether the outage is connected to any preparations Meta might be carrying out for the DMA.

In 2021, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp were down for hours, an outage the company said was a result of faulty changes on routers that coordinate network traffic between its data centers. The next year, WhatsApp had another brief outage. (AP)

# Nation

## Biden, Trump dominating Super Tuesday races, moving closer to rematch

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—President Joe Biden and his predecessor, Donald Trump, romped coast-to-coast on Super Tuesday, all but cementing a November rematch and increasing pressure on the former president's last major rival, Nikki Haley, to leave the Republican race.

Biden and Trump each won California, Texas, Alabama, Colorado, Maine, Oklahoma, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, Minnesota and Massachusetts. Biden also won the Democratic primaries in Utah, Vermont and Iowa.

Haley won Vermont, but the former president carried other states that might have been fa-

vorable to her such as Virginia and Maine—which have large swaths of moderate voters like those who have backed her in previous primaries.

Not enough states will have voted until later this month for Trump or Biden to formally become their parties' presumptive nominees. But the primary's biggest day made their rematch a near certainty. Both the 81-year-old Biden and the 77-year-old Trump continue to dominate their parties despite facing questions about age and neither having broad popularity across the general electorate.

The only contest Biden lost Tuesday was the Demo-



President Joe Biden arrives to board Air Force One, Tuesday, March 5, 2024, in Hagerstown, Md. The President is traveling to Washington.

### ACROSS THE NATION

**McConnell weighs endorsing Trump. It's a stark turnaround after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack**

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Senate leader Mitch McConnell is the highest-ranking Republican in Congress who has yet to endorse Donald Trump's bid to return to the White House—having once called the defeated president "morally responsible" for the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol attack. But that's potentially about to change. McConnell's political team and Trump's campaign have been in talks over not only a possible endorsement of the former president but a strategy to unite Republicans up and down the party's ticket ahead of the November election, according to a person familiar with the situation and granted anonymity to discuss it. How, when or where McConnell would endorse Trump is less head-spinning than the idea that it could happen at all: A stunning rapprochement for two men who have not spoken since McConnell enraged Trump by declaring Joe Biden the legitimate winner of the 2020 presidential election. But a fast-moving series of events ahead of Super Tuesday's elections have been set in motion by McConnell's own sudden announcement he would step down as leader next session and as Trump is on track to move closer toward the GOP nomination. Taken together, it lays bare the lengths that McConnell, the longest-serving Senate leader and an ever calculating politician, will go as he works to win back Republican control of the Senate in what could be among his final acts in power. "I still have enough gas in the tank to thoroughly disappoint my critics, and I intend to do so with all the enthusiasm which they have become accustomed," McConnell said last week in announcing his decision to step aside as leader for the next session.

### Democrats make play for veteran and military support as Trump homes in on GOP nomination

**CHARLOTTE, N.C.** (AP)—Highway signs welcome drivers entering North Carolina to "the nation's most military friendly state," and veterans here know they're being courted. But in a state where camouflage-colored appeals have become commonplace, recent efforts by progressive groups to cut into what has long been a reliably red constituency face an early test on Super Tuesday. Among the 16 states and one territory casting ballots in Tuesday's 2024 presidential primaries and caucuses are some with the nation's highest rates of active-duty service members and largest populations of veterans: Texas, California, Virginia and North Carolina. But Tar Heel State veterans interviewed in the runup to the primary season's biggest voting day varied in their politics, even if they agreed that their military service informed their opinions.

Ryan Rogers, who fought in Afghanistan and Iraq, says the Biden administration mishandled the August 2021 attacks on Kabul's airport that killed at least 60 Afghans and 13 U.S. troops during U.S. forces' Afghanistan withdrawal. The right-leaning independent voter from eastern North Carolina fears the blasts signaled a weakness that could endanger U.S. troops overseas. "I don't care what side you're on," he said. "You better be strong." But Ric Vandett, a 78-year-old Vietnam veteran from Hickory, won't vote for President Joe Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump. The left-leaning independent voter said he cannot forget Trump's refusal to acknowledge defeat in the 2020 election, which he blames for the Jan. 6 attacks on the U.S. Capitol.

events. Still, her aides insisted that the mood at her watch party was "jubilant."

Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, meanwhile, was packed for a victory party. Among those attending were staff and supporters, including the rapper Fergie and former North Carolina Rep. Madison Cawthorn. The crowd erupted as Fox News, playing on screens around the ballroom, announced that the former

president had won North Carolina's GOP primary.

"They call it Super Tuesday for a reason," Trump told a raucous crowd. He went on to attack Biden over the U.S.-Mexico border and the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Biden didn't give a speech but instead issued a statement warning that Tuesday's results had left Americans with a clear choice and touting his own accomplish-

### Momentum builds in major homelessness case before Supreme Court

**PORTLAND, Ore.** (AP)—Momentum is building in a case regarding homeless encampments that will be argued before the U.S. Supreme Court next month and could have major implications for cities as homelessness nationwide has reached record highs.

Dozens of briefs have been filed in recent days, including from the Department of Justice, members of Congress and state attorneys general. They joined the growing number of western state and local officials who have submitted briefs urging the justices to overturn a controversial lower court decision they say has prevented them from addressing homeless encampments.

In 2018, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals—whose jurisdiction includes nine Western states—ruled it was unconstitutional to punish people who are "involuntarily homeless" for sleeping outside if there are not enough shelter beds. Its Martin

v. Boise decision found that doing so would violate the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Social justice advocates have long supported the decision based on the belief that homelessness shouldn't be criminalized, although rights groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union have yet to file briefs in the case. Many officials in the West, on the other hand, say the decision has prevented them from managing a surge in encampments on sidewalks, in parks and other public places.

The U.S. experienced a dramatic 12% increase in homelessness last year to its highest reported level, a federal report found, as soaring rents and a decline in coronavirus pandemic assistance combined to put housing out of reach for more Americans. About 653,000 people were homeless in the January 2023 count, the most since the country be-

gan using the yearly point-in-time survey in 2007.

More than half the people experiencing homelessness in the country were in four states: California and Washington, which are both under the 9th Circuit's jurisdiction, along with New York and Florida. About 28% of the nation's homeless are estimated to be in California alone, according to the federal report from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The case before the Supreme Court was brought by Grants Pass, a small city nestled in the mountains of southern Oregon that has been barred by court orders—citing Martin v. Boise—from enforcing local ordinances that prohibit sleeping and camping in parks and on public property. In its petition, Grants Pass said it and other cities "find themselves hamstrung in responding to public encampments."

The case has galvanized city, county and state offi-

ments after beating Trump.

"If Donald Trump returns to the White House, all of this progress is at risk," Biden said. "He is driven by grievance and graft, focused on his own revenge and retribution, not the American people."

While much of the focus was on the presidential race, there were also important down-ballot contests. The governor's race took shape in North Carolina, where Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson and Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein will face off in a state that both parties are fiercely contesting ahead of November.

In California, Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff advanced to the general election race to fill the Senate seat long held by Dianne Feinstein, with his opponent still to be determined. And in Los Angeles, a progressive prosecutor attempted to fend off an intense reelection challenge in a contest that could serve as a barometer of the politics of crime.

Despite Biden's and Trump's domination of their parties, polls make it clear that the broader electorate does not want this year's general election to be identical to the 2020 race. A new AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll finds a majority of Americans don't think either Biden or Trump has the necessary mental acuity for the job.

"Both of them failed, in my opinion, to unify this country," said Brian Hadley, 66, of Raleigh, North Carolina.

ials from across the West, including Democrats and Republicans, and increasingly national officials.

In a brief submitted Monday in support of neither party, the Department of Justice said the 9th Circuit was correct in finding that ordinances punishing people for sleeping outside where there isn't enough shelter space were unconstitutional, but "erred" in having the decision apply to all homeless people "without requiring a more particularized inquiry into the circumstances of the individuals to whom those ordinances may be applied."

"The court declined to decide what showing is required to establish that an individual is involuntarily homeless. That was error," DOJ officials, including Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar and Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Kristen Clarke, wrote in the filing.

The DOJ asked the justices to throw out the 9th Circuit decision and send it back to lower courts for review.

# World

## Gaza cease-fire talks fail to achieve breakthrough with Ramadan just days away

**CAIRO** (AP)—Three days of negotiations with Hamas over a cease-fire in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages failed to achieve a breakthrough on Tuesday, Egyptian officials said, less than a week before the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the informal deadline for a deal.

The nearly five months of fighting left much of Gaza in ruins and created a worsening humanitarian catastrophe, with many, especially in the devastated northern region, scrambling for food to survive.

“We must get more aid into Gaza,” U.S. President Joe Biden said Tuesday. “There’s no excuse. None.”

Aid groups have said it has become nearly impossible to deliver supplies within most of Gaza because of the difficulty of coordinating with the Israeli military, the ongoing hostilities and the breakdown of public order.

The United States, Qatar and Egypt have spent weeks trying to broker an agreement in which Hamas would release up to 40 hostages in return for a six-week cease-fire, the release of some Palestinian prisoners and a major influx of aid to the isolated territory.

Two Egyptian officials said that the latest round of discussions ended on Tuesday. They said Hamas presented a propos-

al that mediators would discuss with Israel in the coming days. One of the officials said that mediators would meet Wednesday with the Hamas delegation, which didn’t leave Cairo.

Hamas has refused to release all of the estimated 100 hostages it holds, and the remains of around 30 more, unless Israel ends its offensive, withdraws from Gaza and releases a large number of Palestinian prisoners, including senior militants serving life sentences.

U.S. officials have said that they are skeptical that Hamas actually wants a deal, because the group has balked at a number of what the U.S. and others believe are legitimate requests, including giving the names of hostages to be released.

“It is on Hamas to make decisions about whether it is prepared to engage,” U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tuesday.

“We have an opportunity for an immediate cease-fire that can bring hostages home, that can dramatically increase the amount of humanitarian aid getting in to Palestinians who so desperately need it, and can set the conditions for an enduring resolution,” Blinken said.

Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan said Tuesday that his group demands a permanent cease-fire, rather than a six-week pause, and a “complete

withdrawal” of Israeli forces.

“The security and safety of our people will be achieved only by a permanent cease-fire, the end of the aggression and the withdrawal from every inch of the Gaza Strip,” Hamdan told reporters in Beirut.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has publicly rejected Hamas’ demands and repeatedly vowed to continue the war until Hamas is dismantled and all

the hostages are returned. Israel didn’t send a delegation to the latest round of talks.

Israel was still waiting for Hamas to hand over a list of hostages who are alive as well as the hostage-to-prisoner ratio it seeks in any release deal, an Israeli official said. It wasn’t clear if that information was included in the latest proposal.

The Israeli and Egyptian officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they

weren’t authorized to brief the media on the negotiations.

When asked whether Hamas has a list of the surviving hostages, Hamdan said that the matter wasn’t relevant to the talks and accused Israel of using it as an excuse to avoid engaging in the negotiations.

Benny Gantz, a member of Netanyahu’s War Cabinet and his main political rival, met with senior U.S. officials in Washington on

a visit that drew a rebuke from the prime minister, the latest sign of a growing rift within Israel’s leadership.

Mediators had hoped to broker an agreement before Ramadan, the month of dawn-to-dusk fasting that often sees heightened Israeli-Palestinian tensions linked to access to a major holy site in Jerusalem. Ramadan is expected to begin around March 10, depending on the sighting of the moon.

## Ukraine says it sunk another Russian warship in the Black Sea using high-tech sea drones

**KYIV, Ukraine** (AP)—Ukraine claimed Tuesday it has sunk another Russian warship in the Black Sea using high-tech sea drones as Kyiv’s forces take aim at targets well behind the war’s front line. Russian authorities did not confirm the claim.

The Ukrainian military intelligence agency said a special operations unit destroyed the large patrol ship Sergey Kotov overnight. The ship, which Ukraine said was commissioned in 2021 and was hit near the Kerch Strait, reportedly can carry cruise missiles and around 60 crew.

The sinking of such a modern ship would be a significant loss and embarrassing blow for Moscow, even though there are dozens of other vessels in its Black Sea fleet.

Kyiv officials say some 20% of Russian missile attacks on Ukraine are launched from the Black Sea, and successful Ukrainian attacks have dented Moscow’s capability.

Patrol ships such as the Sergey Kotov are part of Russia’s countermeasures against drone attacks, according to an article published last month by the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a

U.S. think tank. The vessels use radar and a helicopter to detect and destroy drones using grenade launchers and heavy machine guns, it said.

Kyiv’s forces are struggling to keep the better-provisioned Russian army at bay at some points along the largely static 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line, but are also taking aim at targets far beyond it.

In the Black Sea, Ukrainian successes against enemy warships have pushed the Russian fleet away from the coast, allowing Ukraine to set up a grain export corridor.

The Ukraine defense min-

istry posted on X, formerly Twitter, a video of what it said was the nighttime attack on the Sergey Kotov using Magura V5 uncrewed vessels that are designed and built in Ukraine and laden with explosives. Seven Russian crew members were killed and six were injured, while 52 were rescued, the military intelligence agency said.

The Ukrainian claims could not immediately be independently verified. Disinformation has been a feature of the fighting that broke out after Russia’s full-scale invasion of its neighbor in February 2022.

## US destroyer shoots down missile, drones launched by Houthi rebels

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates** (AP)—A U.S. destroyer shot down drones and a missile launched by Yemen’s Houthi rebels toward it in the Red Sea, officials said early Wednesday, as the Indian navy released images of it fighting a fire aboard a container ship earlier targeted by the Houthis.

The assault Tuesday apparently targeted the USS Carney, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer that has been involved in the American campaign against the rebels who have launched attacks over Israel’s war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The Houthi attack involved bomb-carrying drones and one anti-ship ballistic missile, the U.S. military’s Central Command said.

The U.S. later launched an airstrike destroying three anti-ship missiles and three bomb-carrying drone boats, Central Command said.

Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, a Houthi military spokesman, acknowledged the attack, but claimed its forces targeted two American warships, without elaborating.

The Houthis “will not stop until the aggression is stopped and the siege on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip is lifted,” Saree said.

Saree did not acknowledge the later U.S. airstrikes. The Houthis have not offered any assessment of the damage they’ve suffered in the American-led strikes that began in January, though it has said at least 22 of its fighters have been killed.

Since November, the rebels have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea and surrounding waters over the Israel-Hamas war. Those vessels have included at least one with cargo bound for Iran, the Houthis’ main benefactor, and an aid ship later bound for Houthi-controlled territory.

Despite more than a month and a half of U.S.-led airstrikes, Houthi rebels have remained capable of launching significant attacks. They include the attack last month on a cargo ship carrying fertilizer, the Rubymar, which sank on Saturday after drifting for several days, and the downing of an American drone worth tens of millions of dollars.

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# Environment

## Weather, climate change will worsen locust outbreaks, study finds

By CARLOS MUREITHI

Associated Press

Extreme wind and rain may lead to bigger and worse desert locust outbreaks, with human-caused climate change likely to intensify the weather patterns and cause higher outbreak risks, a new study has found.

The desert locust—a short-horned species found in some dry areas of northern and eastern Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia—is a migratory insect that travels in swarms of millions over long distances and damages crops, causing famine and food insecurity. A square kilometer swarm comprises 80 million locusts that can in one day consume food crops enough to feed 35,000 people. The U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization describes it as "the most destructive migratory pest in the world."

The study, published in *Science Advances* on Wednesday, said these outbreaks will be "increasingly hard to prevent and control" in a warming climate.

Xiaogang He, author of the study and an assistant professor at the National University of Singapore, said more frequent and severe extreme weather events due to climate change could add unpredictability to locust outbreaks.

But he hoped that the study could help countries under-



A boy holds locusts he caught in Elburgon, Kenya, March 17, 2021.

BRIAN INGANGA

stand and address "the impacts of climate variability on locust dynamics, particularly in the context of its repercussions on agricultural productivity and food security" and urged better regional and continental cooperation among countries and control organizations to respond quickly and build early warning systems.

To assess the risk of locust outbreaks in Africa and the Middle East and the connection to climate change, scientists analyzed incidents of desert locust outbreaks from 1985 to 2020 using the Food and Agriculture Organization's

Locust Hub data tool. They created and used a data-driven framework to examine the insects' patterns to find out what may cause outbreaks to happen across long distances.

They found that 10 countries, including Kenya, Morocco, Niger, Yemen, and Pakistan, experienced the majority of locust outbreaks among 48 affected nations.

The worst outbreak of desert locusts in 25 years struck East Africa in 2019 and 2020, when the insects ravaged hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland and damaged crops, trees and other vegetation, impacting

food security and livelihoods.

Elfatih Abdel-Rahman, a scientist at International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology who wasn't part of the study, said widespread desert locust outbreaks due to climate change will substantially threaten livelihoods in the affected regions due to reduced food production and increase in food prices.

The researchers also found a strong link between the magnitude of desert locust outbreaks and weather and land conditions like air temperature, precipitation, soil moisture, and wind. Desert

locusts are more likely to infest arid areas that receive sudden extreme rainfall, and the number of the insects in an outbreak is strongly impacted by weather conditions.

El Nino, a recurring and natural climate phenomenon that affects weather worldwide, was also strongly tied to bigger and worse desert locust outbreaks.

University of Delaware entomology professor Douglas Tallamy, who wasn't part of the research, said erratic weather and rainfall trigger spurts in vegetation and therefore fuels enormous population growth in locusts.

"As such variability increases, it is logical to predict that locust outbreaks will increase as well," said Tallamy.

The study is "yet another example of what should be a very strong wake-up call that societies across the globe need to come together to reduce climate change and its impacts but also to implement strategies in response to global events such as increasing threats of desert locusts," said Paula Shrewsbury, an entomology professor at the University of Maryland. Shrewsbury was not involved in the study.

The study found that especially vulnerable locations like Morocco and Kenya remain

high-risk but locust habitats had expanded since 1985 and projects that they will continue growing by at least 5% by the end of the 21st century, predictably to west India and west central Asia.

It gives the example of the Rub' al Khali, or Empty Quarter, a desert in the southern Arabian Peninsula, as a place that was historically uncommon for desert locust outbreaks but then became a hotspot. The desert experienced locust outbreaks in 2019 after uncontrolled breeding following cyclones, which filled the desert with freshwater lakes.

Major locust outbreaks can have huge financial impacts. It cost more than \$450 million to respond to a locust outbreak that happened in West Africa from 2003 to 2005, according to the World Bank. The outbreak had caused an estimated \$2.5 billion in crop damage, it said.

Countries affected by desert locust outbreaks are already grappling with climate-driven extremes like droughts, floods and heat waves, and the potential escalation of locust risks in these regions could exacerbate existing challenges, said research author Xiaogang.

"Failure to address these risks could further strain food production systems and escalate the severity of global food insecurity," he said.

## John Kerry reflects on time as top US climate negotiator

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Time was running out and U.S. Climate Envoy John Kerry knew it.

International climate talks in mid-December were stuck with no agreement to phase out oil, gas and coal, fossil fuels that are the root cause of global warming.

The United Nations sponsored conference official end date, a day after Kerry's 80th birthday, was fast approaching. What's more, Kerry's Chinese counterpart, Xie Zhenhua, who helped craft past deals with him, announced that he was retiring. Opportunity could be slipping away at the summit known as COP28, being held in Dubai.

"It made me bear down and get to a lot more meetings, one-on-one and otherwise, and frankly dragged a few other people into the effort to persuade and make the difference," Kerry recalled during a recent interview with The Associated Press, given ahead of his retirement this week.



Kerry

In the heat of negotiations, the energy minister of Saudi Arabia, an oil-rich nation that has long opposed diplomatic attempts to limit fossil fuels, agreed on language about "transitioning away" from the carbon-belching energy supplies.

"Don't get excited yet," Kerry recalled telling himself. He had seen victories slip away at the last moment before.

This time it didn't.

Instead, the deal struck turned out to be what Kerry now calls the high point of the world's 30-year effort to curb ever-worsening climate change. All in just 48 hours.

"This was a major breakthrough," Kerry said, one that made him ready to leave his climate diplomacy job after three years. In January, Kerry announced plans to step down and Wednesday will be his last in office.

Sitting in his U.S. State Department office with cavernous ceilings, wood paneled

walls festooned with modern art and photographs, Kerry reflected on his years leading America's efforts to combat climate change and detailed why he believed the Dubai agreement was so important.

In the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement, which Kerry, at the time secretary of state, signed with a granddaughter on his lap, nations were only required to enact plans they wrote up. That allowed countries like China to leave out major things, like the need to reduce emissions of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.

"We now have an agreement globally that we have to transition away from fossil fuel, that we have to do it with urgency, immediately in this decade, beginning now, and that we have to do it by including all greenhouse gases," said Kerry.

Still, not everyone is enamored with international climate efforts so far.

"Overblown," said climate negotiations historian Joanna Depledge, referring to Kerry's assessment of Dubai as the high point of climate diplomacy.

"Have you seen oil and gas prices shift in response to the adoption of the Dubai Consensus?" Depledge of the University of Cambridge in England said in an email. "No, nor have I. We are making incremental progress. That's great. But a whole new track? No."

Depledge said Kerry will be remembered as "a force for good in the negotiations," turning the page on low points, such as previous U.S. administrations pulling out—twice—from international climate agreements.

Kerry said the second time the U.S. pulled out of an agreement, when former President Donald Trump removed America from the Paris accord soon after taking office in 2017, the country's reputation was damaged, as were international efforts to fight climate change.

## Harris announces \$5.8B for water infrastructure projects

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—

The Biden administration announced Tuesday that states will share \$5.8 billion in federal funds for water infrastructure projects around the country, paid for by one of its key legislative victories.

The new round of funding will help pay for projects nationwide, bringing the total awarded to states for water infrastructure improvements to \$22 billion. The money comes from the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure law that President Joe Biden signed in 2021, according to the White House.

Vice President Kamala Harris, who traveled to Pittsburgh to make the announcement, said everyone in the U.S. should be able to have clean water.

"I shouldn't have to say that, but it does come down to that," Harris said. "Every person should have a right and the ability to have access to clean water, and it should not matter where you live or how much money you earn or how much money you got in your back

pocket," she said.

Harris said more than \$200 million of the new federal funding will go to Pennsylvania, one of several states that will help determine whether Biden is reelected in November. The money will go toward replacing lead pipes and aging water mains and storm drains, she said.

The infrastructure law includes over \$50 billion to upgrade America's water infrastructure and is touted by the Biden administration as the largest investment in clean water in U.S. history.

The White House said Tuesday's announcement includes \$3.2 billion for what's known as the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund that can be used for upgrades to water treatment plants, water distribution and piping systems, and lead pipe replacement. It also includes \$1 billion for seven major rural water projects and \$1 billion in support for Great Lakes drinking water projects.

# Life & Style

## Colin Firth's costume from 'Pride and Prejudice' wet-shirt scene nets a tidy sum

LONDON (AP)—What's arguably the most famous wet shirt in television history sold for 20,000 pounds (\$25,000) on Tuesday—water not included.

The white linen garment worn by Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy in the BBC's 1995 TV adaptation of "Pride and Prejudice" was the star item at an auction of film and television costumes. Firth's costume—including boots, moleskin breeches and velvet waistcoat—fetched double its top pre-sale estimate of 10,000 pounds (\$12,700) during a sale at Kerry Taylor Auctions.



The total price is 25,000 pounds (\$32,000) once an auction house fee known as the buyer's premium is added.

The scene in which Firth's brooding heartthrob emerges from a pond, startling soon-to-be true love Elizabeth Bennet (Jennifer Ehle), was once voted the U.K.'s most memorable television moment.

It was later re-imagined in "Bridgerton" in a scene featuring British actor Jonathan Bailey. Firth referenced his own performance with further romantic soakings in "Love, Actually" and "Bridget Jones:

The Edge of Reason."

Other items up for sale include a 1950s' Christian Dior taffeta ball gown worn by Madonna in the 1996 movie "Evita," which sold for 40,000 pounds (\$50,000) and Johnny Depp's costume for Ichabod Crane in "Sleepy Hollow," which fetched 24,000 pounds (\$30,000).

Clothes worn by Depp as the Earl of Rochester in "The Libertine" and as writer J.M. Barrie in "Finding Neverland" were also among some 60 items that went under the hammer.

A costume handler arranges Colin Firth's 'wet-shirt' costume as Mr Darcy in the TV series Pride and Prejudice, 1995, at Kerry Taylor Auctions in London, Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2024.

### SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

#### UK government says Kate to appear in June for a ceremony. But the announcement has caused confusion

LONDON (AP)—Britain's government appeared to have made an embarrassing mistake Tuesday after it advertised that Kate, the Princess of Wales, will attend a Trooping the Color ceremony in June, apparently before consulting palace officials. The announcement on the U.K. Ministry of Defense's website drew attention because the June appearance would be the first major official duty confirmed for Kate, 42, since she underwent abdominal surgery. But army officials seemed to have jumped the gun because Prince William and Kate's office, Kensington Palace, hasn't confirmed any scheduled public events for Kate. It's up to palace officials, not government departments, to announce and confirm the royals' attendance at events. The announcement caused confusion amid intense media attention on the state of Kate's health. The royal has been out of the public eye since January, when palace officials

announced that she was admitted to a private London hospital for unspecified planned surgery. They didn't provide more details, but said that she wouldn't return to public duties until after Easter.

#### Workplace safety regulator says management failed in fatal shooting by Alec Baldwin

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP)—Complaints by a movie weapons supervisor to managers went unheeded as she sought more time and resources to fulfill safety duties on the set of the Western movie "Rust," where actor Alec Baldwin fatally shot a cinematographer, a workplace safety investigator testified Tuesday at trial. Defense attorneys for armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed called the inspector among their first witnesses to refute allegations of involuntary manslaughter in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer Halyna Hutchins during a rehearsal in October 2021. Lorenzo Montoya, of the New Mexico Occupational Health and Safety Bureau, conducted

a six-month investigation of the shooting and whether managers affiliated with Rust Movie Productions complied with state workplace safety regulations. His inspection produced a scathing narrative of safety failures in violation of standard industry protocols, including observations that weapons specialists were not allowed to make decisions about additional safety training and didn't respond to Gutierrez-Reed's complaints. The report also found that managers took limited or no action to address two misfires on set before the fatal shooting and requests to provide more training.

#### Booth where Tony Soprano may—or may not—have been whacked sells for a cool \$82K to mystery buyer

BLOOMFIELD, N.J. (AP)—The ice cream parlor booth where Tony Soprano may or may not have been whacked has sold for more than \$82,000. An anonymous buyer bid \$82,600 Monday night in an online auction for the piece of memorabilia that occupies an outsize role in the lore of the award-winning

HBO series—particularly because it was where the New Jersey mob boss was sitting when the series ended by cutting to black, outraging many viewers and claiming a place in TV history. Ron Stark, co-owner of Holsten's, the northern New Jersey ice cream parlor, candy shop and restaurant where the scene was filmed, won't say a word about who bought it, including whether it was a man or a woman. (That whole code of silence thing.) Anyway, the story starts with some broken legs—on the tables of the restaurant that opened in 1939, that is. Suffice it to say, things were trending downward.

#### Alice McDermott and Claire Jiménez are among 5 finalists for PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction

NEW YORK (AP)—Alice McDermott's novel about military wives in Vietnam, "Absolution," and the Jamel Brinkley story collection "Witness" are among the finalists for the PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction. The other nominees announced Tuesday in-

clude Henry Hoke's "Open Throat," the rare novel to be narrated by a mountain lion; Claire Jiménez's family drama-mystery, "What Happened to Ruthy Ramirez," and Colin Winnette's tech-saga, "Users." "With an astonishingly varied range of protagonists—the ghosts of New York City, U.S. military wives in wartime Saigon, Staten Island Latinas, a virtual reality designer, and a mountain lion living under the Hollywood sign—this year's finalists offer definitive proof that fiction, to invoke Walt Whitman, contains multitudes," PEN/Faulkner Awards Committee Chair Louis Bayard said in a statement. The winner, to be announced next month, receives \$15,000. The runners-up each get \$5,000. Previous winners include Philip Roth, Ann Patchett and Yiyun Li.

#### Stories of migration from around the world are longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction

LONDON (AP)—Novels that give voice to the often unheard stories of migrants around the

world are among the nominees for the 2024 Women's Prize for Fiction. The 16-book longlist announced Tuesday for the 30,000 pound (\$38,000) award includes works by writers from Ghana, Barbados, Britain, the United States, Ireland, South Korea and Australia. Novelist Monica Ali, who is chairing the panel of judges, said the works range from science fiction—Barbadian writer Karen Lord's "The Blue, Beautiful World"—to historical fiction, coming-of-age stories, "intimate domestic dramas" and epic sagas. The settings include Sri Lanka, the Middle East, Australia and Korea. Ali said many of the books deal with themes of migration or immigration, in very different ways. Maya Binyam's "Hangman" and Isabella Hammad's "Enter Ghost" deal with emigrants' return to their homelands. Peace Adzo Medie's "Nightbloom," about two childhood friends in Ghana and the U.S., confronts racism and the immigrant experience. Aube Rey Lescure's "River East, River West" depicts west to east immigration through Americans in China.

## Daughter's open marriage reveal gives parent pause

**D**EAR ABBY: My daughter and her husband have been together for 10 years, married for three of them. They have a 1-year-old daughter. I have just learned they may be getting a divorce. My son-in-law is very controlling as well as verbally and emotionally abusive. He yells, swears and slams doors over the littlest things. It has been going on for the past couple of years.

My daughter deserves to be happy, and she doesn't want to raise my granddaughter in that environment. However, she just confided to me that they have been in an open marriage for the last three months. Both have other people in their lives.

I'm having a hard time processing this. I come from the generation where that kind of thing is morally wrong, and I'm heartbroken about the whole thing. I love my daughter and want to support her, but if I don't, I risk losing her and my granddaughter forever. How can I cope?

COMPLETELY THROWN IN OHIO

**DEAR THROWN:** Your daughter and son-in-law's open marriage will soon be over. (Hallelujah!) While you may not approve of your daughter's sexual activity, she's an adult and has a right to live her life as she sees fit. (She may have been pressured into trying it.)

The Bible says, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." I strongly

recommend you try to remember and follow that dictate if you want to continue to have a relationship with your daughter and grandchild. She may need all of the emotional support she can get.

■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** I have four sisters. I have felt like the "odd one out" my entire life, and they know it. They gossip about me and my children at every opportunity. They are all financially well off. I am not. They take trips and get together frequently, but don't include me because they think I can't afford it. When I have made my feelings known, they say I'm "too sensitive" and a "drama queen."

I told them they don't have the right to look down on me and judge. How can I get them to stop being so superior and accept me and my children? I have been a widow for five years after a long and abusive marriage. They accuse me of exaggerating the mental and emotional abuse I experienced. How can I make them understand?

EXCLUDED SIS IN NEBRASKA

**DEAR SIS:** You wrote that you have felt like the odd one out your entire life, and your sisters know it. You also stated that they travel together without including you because they think you can't afford it. If that's true, do you think they should have paid your fare? If you do, it's presumptuous.

### DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

After a long and abusive marriage you must feel like you have been let out of jail. For your sisters to dismiss what you experienced as exaggeration is insensitive and cruel. Because you aren't going to change them, eliminate them from your life. They may be unwilling or unable to give you the inclusion and acceptance you seek from them.

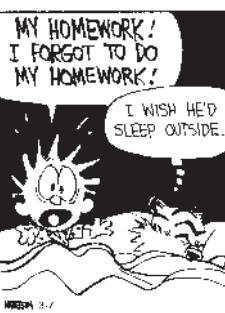
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# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Waterson



## Garfield®

By Jim Davis



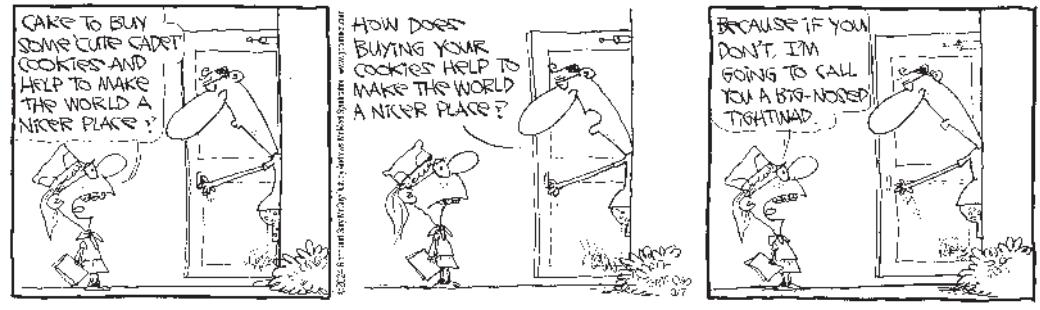
## Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



## CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	33	Pub pint	55	Mideast airline	19	Egyptian sun god	
1	Actor	34	—	Péribon	21	Curved line	
2	Connery	56	Decomposes	57	Smoke, for short	24	Moody rock genre
3	5 Wilde-beest	35	Promptly	58	Lairs	25	Dapper fellow
4	8 Pre-weekend yell	38	Tourname-ment	59	Everybody hates tea. It's dirt water.	26	Don Adams
5	12 Fashion magazine	39	Fall from grace	60	I mean... a lot of people like it.	27	TV show
6	13 Recede	40	Commotion	61	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	28	Day —
7	14 Russo of "Ransom"	41	Harm	62	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	29	paint
8	15 "Not so fast!"	42	Sick in bed	63	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	30	Fare
9	16 Menlo Park monogram	43	Part of Q.E.D.	64	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	31	Low digit
10	17 Diminutive suffix	44	50 Saigon	65	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	32	German river
11	18 Mountain chain	45	Chorus syllables	66	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	33	Gap
12	20 Musket acces-sory	46	53 Beige	67	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	34	Chang's brother
13	22 "Hum-bug!"	47	54 Author	68	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	35	Seethed
14	23 Sturgeon product	48	Fleming	69	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	36	Opposite of nyet
15	24 Jittery	50	Solution time: 24 mins.	70	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	37	Antelope's playmate
16	27 Type of foam mattress	51	MCS DAL JUL E	71	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	38	Not pizzicato
17	32 Astronaut Jemison	52	IAN CVO ESTEE	72	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	39	Grand tale
18		53	NIA WESTWORLD	73	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	40	Valley
19		54	ORC DRESS	74	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	41	Buddies
20		55	ROKU SRA DADA	75	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	42	— Bator
21		56	LYE REASON	76	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	43	Japanese "yes"
22		57	ELENA RULED	77	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	44	Conceptis Sudoku
23		58	KAYAKS URN	78	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	45	By Dave Green
24		59	GHEE COS THUD	79	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	46	Sudoku
25		60	WORLDWIDE IIN	80	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	47	is a number-placing
26		61	ETHIC OUR SAN	81	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	48	puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with
27		62	SIOLI NPH IKO	82	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	49	several given numbers. The
28		63	Last Friday's Answer	83	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	50	object is to place the numbers
29		64		84	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	51	1 to 9 in the empty squares so
30		65		85	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	52	that each row, each column
31		66		86	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	53	and each 3x3 box contains
32		67		87	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	54	the same number only once. The
33		68		88	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	55	difficulty level of the Conceptis
34		69		89	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	56	Sudoku increases from Monday
35		70		90	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	57	to Saturday.
36		71		91	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	58	Last Friday's Answer
37		72		92	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	59	
38		73		93	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	60	
39		74		94	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	61	
40		75		95	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	62	
41		76		96	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	63	
42		77		97	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	64	
43		78		98	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	65	
44		79		99	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	66	
45		80		100	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	67	
46		81		101	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	68	
47		82		102	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	69	
48		83		103	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	70	
49		84		104	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	71	
50		85		105	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	72	
51		86		106	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	73	
52		87		107	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	74	
53		88		108	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	75	
54		89		109	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	76	
55		90		110	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	77	
56		91		111	They're faking like people who say they like Shakespeare.	78	

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**STUMPED?**

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

## SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

6	5			9	8		
4		2				5	
						6	
1		9	7	2			8
8	7	3	5				
9	5	6		7			
6	4	7	3		1		
9							

Difficulty: ★★★

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

4	5	9	8	1	2	6	3	7
2	7	8	3	6	9	1	4	5
3	1	6	4	5	7	2	8	9
7	6	4	5	2	1	8	9	3
9	8	5	7	3	6	4	1	2
1	3	2	9	4	8	7	5	6
8	4	7	6	9	5	3	2	1
5	2	3	1	7	4	9	6	8
6	9	1	2	8	3	5	7	4

Difficulty: ★★★

3/7

## WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

### YOUR FAVORITE MEAL

F	E	S	T	I	V	E	L	O	R	E	S	S	A	C
A	S	N	K	C	U	L	T	O	P	A	S	T	A	Y
M	P	E	T	F	A	O	L	T	A	E	M	K	T	
I	A	P	A	R	B	N	S	◎	U	P	E	R	A	S
L	G	L	E	F	E	A	U	Q	R	I	E	G	C	A
Y	H	A	T											

# Dean Wade has big 4th quarter as Cavs rally past Celtics, 105-104



**CLEVELAND** (AP)—Dean Wade made five 3-pointers and scored 20 points in the fourth quarter, and Cleveland won a replay review in the final second to stun Boston 105-104 on Tuesday night, ending the NBA-leading Celtics' winning streak at 11 games.

The Cavs overcame a 22-point deficit in the fourth quarter without All-Star Donovan Mitchell, who missed the game with a knee injury, as well as forward Evan Mobley, who went out with a sprained ankle in the third.

Wade finished with a career-high 23 points and his putback dunk with 19.1 seconds left put the Cavs ahead 105-104.

Darius Garland was called for a foul on Boston's Jayson Tatum with 0.7 seconds left, but the Cavs challenged and officials overturned the call, ruling that Tatum had initiated the contact.

Tatum scored 26 points and Kristaps Porzingis had 24 for Boston, which lost for the first time since Feb. 1.

## PACERS 137, MAVERICKS 120

**DALLAS** (AP)—Myles Turner scored 20 points, Tyrese Haliburton had 19 points and 11 assists, and Indiana beat Dallas despite Luka Doncic's fourth consecutive game with a 30-point triple-double.

Doncic had 39 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds. Russell



Cleveland Cavaliers forward Dean Wade, right, grabs a rebound in front of Boston Celtics guard Jrue Holiday (4) in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, March 5, 2024, in Cleveland. AP

Westbrook is the lone player in NBA history with five straight 30-point triple-doubles, and Oscar Robertson is the only other player with four.

Nine players scored in double figures for the Pacers, including five reserves as Indiana's bench outscored Dallas' 69-32.

Benedict Mathurin had 19 points off the bench for the Pacers. Starting forward Pascal Siakam added 13 points, 13 rebounds and six assists.

Kyrie Irving scored 23 for Dallas. P.J. Washington had 20 points, and Daniel Gafford add-

ed 16 points and 10 rebounds.

## NETS 112, 76ERS 107

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Dennis Schroder and Dorian Finney-Smith each scored 20 points and Brooklyn beat Philadelphia.

Lonnie Walker IV added 19 points and Nic Claxton had 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Nets, who bounced back quickly after a poor performance

Monday in a 106-102 home loss to Memphis. They took advantage of a short-handed Philadelphia team that was missing both its All-Stars in Tyrese Maxey

and Joel Embiid. Maxey was scratched early Tuesday because of a concussion.

Kelly Oubre Jr. scored a season-high 30 points for the 76ers, who had won two straight. Tobias Harris added 18.

## PELICANS 139, RAPTORS 98

**TORONTO** (AP)—Trey Murphy III scored a season-high 34 points, Jonas Valanciunas had 10 points and 10 rebounds against his former team, and New Orleans beat short-handed Toronto.

Murphy matched a career best by making 10 of 14 3-point attempts as the Pelicans handed the Raptors their worst defeat of the season, eclipsing a 38-point drubbing they gave Toronto in New Orleans last month.

The Pelicans made 24 of 49 attempts from 3-point range.

Herb Jones scored 17 points, Zion Williamson had 16 and Brandon Ingram 12. New Orleans has won three of four.

Immanuel Quickley scored 17 points for the Raptors, who played with-

## Analysis: Love, DeRozan still have plenty to say about mental health

By TIM REYNOLDS  
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

DeMar DeRozan and Kevin Love still have things to say.

It's been six years since they went public with their challenges regarding mental health. DeRozan started a conversation with a tweet about depression in February 2018. Love followed a few weeks later with a first-person essay about his anxiety. And it didn't take long for the entire NBA community to stand up and take notice.

DeRozan and Love instantly became catalysts that sparked a shift toward destigmatizing mental health issues in the NBA. It has become a passion for both and it's still raring. DeRozan has a new video series of 1-on-1 conversations over dinners with athletes and celebrities about mental health, while Love hosted an event Monday with high school students to talk on the floor that he and the Miami Heat call home about issues and help them understand that everyone is going through something.

"Some of the greatest conversations that I've ever had and witnessed was at a dinner

table. It's fitting to be able to be in a position to have open-heart dialogue about some real things that we deal with on a daily basis," DeRozan, the Chicago Bulls guard, said in a promo for the "Dinners with DeMar" series that started last month with Draymond Green. The series continues Tuesday with Dwyane Wade and has another episode coming in two weeks with Damian Lillard. "So, there's so much that can come from a dinner table conversation."

Or a tweet. Or an essay. Or just a locker room chat. It all helps.

For Love, this path toward talking about his issues—which date back to his childhood—truly started on Nov. 5, 2017, when he was playing for Cleveland in a home game against Atlanta. It was the third quarter. His heart was racing. He couldn't breathe normally. He didn't know it at the time, but he was having a panic attack. Similar issues hit him in another game against Oklahoma City a couple of months later.

And a month or so after that, DeRozan tweeted about depression. Love finally knew he

wasn't alone. The path toward healing was underway.

"DeMar changed my life," Love said. "If not for him, I don't know. Could be dead. That's a real thing. But DeMar's special. He did that not knowing what would come of it."

It made sense for some to ask how DeRozan and Love—both incredibly rich, each with a chance of going to the Basketball Hall of Fame, multi-time All-Stars, living the good life of the NBA—could possibly be depressed. They helped kick down the stigma that successful people cannot struggle. Both have spoken about how players around the league have approached them and asked how to start down their own paths toward understanding and improving their mental health.

"It illustrates that success is not immune to depression," actor Bryan Cranston tweeted in 2018, in reaction to chef Anthony Bourdain's and fashion icon Kate Spade's deaths by suicide just days apart.

That quote has stuck with Love ever since. He referenced

it Monday, word for word.

"Teammates trusting me and allowing me to be unapologetically myself allowed me to be more comfortable in my own skin and actually able to breathe better out there on the floor," Love said. "Sharing your story, you might change your own life. You might change the next person's life. It's an amazing thing."

This is, obviously, not just an NBA issue.

The National Institute on Mental Health said it estimated that 21 million adults in the U.S.—that's one out of every 12—had at least one major depressive episode in 2021. And among adolescents between the ages of 12 to 17, it was even more prevalent, with basically 1 in 5 (20.1%) having such an episode that year.

Love started the Kevin Love Fund to help provide resources that people need, including an educational component where teachers and counselors are given a curriculum toward social emotional learning. The message is tailored to each place, each student, but the basic tenet is this: letting kids know that

they aren't alone.

"It's a beautiful thing to see where this is heading," Love said.

The fight is never over. DeRozan and Love never asked to be the faces of change, yet neither has shunned the role, either. By letting others know six years ago that they themselves were broken, they touched lives in a way that hitting a game-winning shot never would. It was real. It mattered.

So, they're still talking. Still sharing. Still helping others. Still helping themselves.

"I definitely think continuing doing things like this, helping one another, speaking about the ups and the downs, the dark places, trying to address it right away instead of letting it linger, we're definitely helping one another," DeRozan said. "I'm happy to be here, to be able to do this."

Love hasn't been asked to be part of DeRozan's dinner conversation series yet. If DeRozan asks, Love will instantly accept.

It only seems right.

"Every time I see DeMar, I tell him the same thing," Love said. "I love him."

out All-Star Scottie Barnes and center Jakob Poeltl.

## ROCKETS 114, SPURS 101

**HOUSTON** (AP)—Alperen Sengun had a career-high 45 points and a season-best 16 rebounds as Houston beat San Antonio.

Sengun, who is in his third NBA season, also set a career mark with five steals and had three assists and a block. Jalen Green added 23 points and 10 assists for the Rockets, and Fred VanVleet had 21 points.

Devin Vassell scored 22 points for San Antonio. Rookie Victor Wembanyama had 10 points, 11 rebounds and seven blocks for the Spurs, whose two-game winning streak ended.

## HEAT 118, PISTONS 110

**MIAMI** (AP)—Jimmy Butler scored 15 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter, Bam Adebayo and Duncan Robinson each scored 18 and Miami beat Detroit.

Terry Rozier scored 17 points, Caleb Martin had 15 points and Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 11 for the Heat, who improved to 11-3 in their last 14 games.

Cade Cunningham scored 23 for Detroit, which fell back into a tie with Washington for the NBA's worst record at 9-52. Simone Fontecchio scored 22 for the Pistons.

## HAWKS 116, KNICKS 100

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Jalen Johnson scored 26 points and Atlanta beat New York, which played without the injured Jalen Brunson.

De'Andre Hunter had 22 points off the bench and Dejounte Murray finished with 21 for the Hawks.

Donte DiVincenzo led the Knicks with 21 points and Bojan Bogdanovic had 19. The Knicks attempted a season-high 52 3-pointers, but only made 16 (30.8%).

## MAGIC 101, HORNETS 89

**CHARLOTTE, N.C.** (AP)—Paolo Banchero had 22 points, Cole Anthony scored 12 of his 14 points in the second half and surging Orlando beat Charlotte for its ninth win in 11 games.

Wendell Carter Jr. had 12 points and nine rebounds for the Magic (36-26), who moved 10 games above .500 for the first time since April 18, 2012.

Vasa Micic, who got the start at point guard with LaMelo Ball and Cody Martin out with injuries, had a career-high 21 points for Charlotte, which lost its fifth straight. Tre Mann and Brandon Miller each scored 18 for the Hornets.

# Last year's free agent frenzy offers both hope and caution for NFL teams

By JOSH DUBOW  
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

NFL teams are set to dole out billions in free agent contracts in the coming weeks as teams around the league hope that bold moves in March will pay off with wins on the field once the season starts.

But in a league with a sharp aging curve and specific systems that don't suit all players those dollars spent don't guarantee success.

According to the Spotrac website, NFL teams handed out more than \$3.3 billion in contracts last offseason with nearly half of that money fully guaranteed at signing.

The biggest spenders were far from the biggest winners in the season as signing expensive free agents is typically not the best way to turn around a team.

The six biggest spenders last offseason all missed the postseason led by Denver committing more than \$250 million in contracts only to miss the playoffs for the eighth straight season after going 8-9 in coach Sean Payton's first season.

Other big spenders such as New Orleans, Atlanta, Chicago, Las Vegas and Carolina also were back home when the playoffs started, while a team such as the Los Angeles Rams got into the postseason



Denver Broncos head coach Sean Payton addresses the media after an NFL football game against the Detroit Lions, Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023, in Detroit.

after spending only \$10.2 million in free agency.

Green Bay, Baltimore and Dallas were among the other teams that spent less than \$50 million in free agency last offseason and got into the playoffs.

Here's a look at some of the best signings from a year ago, as well as some big misses:

## FREE AGENT BARGAINS

**QB Baker Mayfield, Tampa Bay:** The Buccaneers viewed last season as a chance to re-

set the roster after going all-in during Tom Brady's three-year run. Tampa Bay took on more than \$80 million in dead money and went cheap at QB, signing Mayfield to a one-year, \$4 million deal. Mayfield delivered with a career-high 28 TD passes to lead the Bucs to a division title and a playoff win. He earned about \$2.85 million in incentives but was still a bargain.

**DE Jadeveon Clowney, Baltimore:** The Ravens became the latest team to give

Clowney a one-year prove-it deal when they signed the 2014 No. 1 overall pick in August. Clowney earned just over \$4 million for his one season with incentives after matching his career high with 9 1/2 sacks for the NFL's stingiest defense.

**LB Drue Tranquill, Kansas City:** The Chiefs added depth at linebacker when they made a low-profile move of signing Tranquill to a one-year, \$3 million deal. He was a key part of a defense that helped

carry Kansas City to a Super Bowl title with 4 1/2 sacks and 78 tackles in the regular season and 21 more tackles during the playoff run.

**TE Dalton Schultz, Houston:** The Texans were looking for a veteran pass catcher to help rookie QB C.J. Stroud and found one in Schultz. Houston signed him to a one-year, \$6.25 million deal and got 59 catches for 635 yards and five TDs in the regular season and another TD in the

playoffs from Schultz.

**G Isaac Seumalo, Pittsburgh:** The Steelers went into last offseason looking to bolster the offensive line and did a good job with the addition of Seumalo, who signed a three-year, \$24 million deal. Seumalo allowed no sacks in the season and was the 10th-rated guard in the NFL, according to Pro Football Focus.

## FREE AGENT BUSTS

**QB Jimmy Garoppolo, Las Vegas:** The Raiders needed a replacement after moving on from Derek Carr and hoped that Garoppolo would be a good fit with his former OC Josh McDaniels as head coach in Las Vegas. But Garoppolo missed much of the offseason recovering from foot surgery after signing a three-year, \$72.75 million contract. He struggled once he got on the field, throwing nine INTs in six starts before being benched. His suspension for performance-enhancing drugs will get the Raiders out of \$11.25 million in guarantees this season.

**QB Derek Carr, New Orleans:** The Saints' deal for Carr didn't work out a whole lot better for New Orleans. Carr signed a \$150 million, four-year deal with the hopes of leading the Saints to the playoffs in the NFL's weakest division. New Orleans couldn't take advantage as Carr got off to a shaky start to the season and narrowly missed the playoffs.

**RT Mike McGlinchey, Denver:** The Broncos gave the second-biggest deal in free agency when they signed him to a five-year, \$87.5 million deal. But the same issues that led to San Francisco moving on from its 2018 first-round pick were still evident in Denver. McGlinchey struggled at times in pass protection with his 49 pressures allowed ranking sixth most among all tackles last season, according to PFF.

**WR Allen Lazard, New York Jets:** The Jets brought in one of Aaron Rodgers' receivers from Green Bay in hopes that the familiarity would lead to success in New York. But Rodgers lasted only one series and Lazard never lived up to the four-year, \$44 million deal he signed. Lazard had just 23 catches for 311 yards and one TD with just four catches in the final nine games of the season.

**WR JuJu Smith-Schuster, New England:** The Patriots let Jakobi Meyers leave for Las Vegas in free agency and signed Smith-Schuster to a slightly cheaper deal instead. While Meyers had his third straight season with at least 800 yards, Smith-Schuster had just 29 catches for 260 yards and one TD after signing a three-year, \$27 million deal.

## Eagles center Jason Kelce retires after 13 NFL seasons and 1 Super Bowl ring

**PHILADELPHIA (AP)**—Jason Kelce needed only seconds to burst into tears.

Kelce's eyes flooded each time he relayed a story about backyard football games with his brother, the love he felt from his parents and the devotion of his coaches—even a band teacher—that shaped him along the way. But it was his career with the Philadelphia Eagles that choked up Kelce the most. The Super Bowl. The parade. His beloved offensive line coach.

All of the memories, the wins, the brotherhood—both with his fellow Eagles players and younger brother Travis, a tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs—consumed Kelce to the point where he needed about 45 minutes to reach the inevitable conclusion that everyone inside a crowded auditorium knew was coming from the moment a news conference was announced.

It was time to retire.

The 36-year-old Kelce officially called it quits Monday at the Eagles' NovaCare Complex, ending a 13-year career spent entirely with Philadelphia in which he became not only one of the great centers of his era who played a key role in the franchise's lone Super Bowl championship but a beloved

Philly personality and popular podcast host.

"Let's see how long this lasts," said Kelce, wearing a sleeveless Eagles T-shirt, before he burst into tears and needed several moments to compose himself at the news conference attended by his parents, Ed and Donna, wife Kylie and Travis, who was wearing sunglasses inside the auditorium. Eagles coach Nick Sirianni sat behind reporters.

"I have been the underdog my entire career," Kelce said. "And I mean it when I say it, I wish I still was."

With Travis in the house, Kelce naturally had to pay homage to Taylor Swift, his brother's girlfriend.

"It's only too poetic I found my career being fulfilled in the city of brotherly love, I knew that relationship all too well," Kelce said in a nod to Swift's song "All Too Well." He also referenced lyrics to Swift's "Wildest Dreams."

Kelce was a sixth-round pick out of Cincinnati in the 2011 draft. The burly, bushy-haired and bearded Kelce has been a stalwart of the offensive line since he was drafted and as an Iron Man after he missed most of the 2012 season with a partially torn MCL and torn ACL.

The moment that endeared him for life to the Philly faithful came at the Super Bowl parade following the 2017 season when he dressed as one of Philadelphia's famed Mummers, and he delivered a fiery, profane speech that whipped the crowd into a frenzy.

"No one likes us! No one likes us! No one likes us! We don't care," Kelce exclaimed that day in February 2018.

"We're from Philly! (Expletive) Philly. No one likes us! We don't care!"

Kelce recalled that moment Monday, saying: "I won't forget the parade and what it meant to the city of Philadelphia. The joy in our community and the closure it gave so many."

"That wasn't my speech," Kelce said. "It was Philadelphia's."

The Kelce brothers played each other in the Super Bowl two seasons ago, which was won by the Chiefs - "I won't forget falling short to the Chiefs,"

Jason said Monday - and co-host the "New Heights with Jason & Travis Kelce" podcast. Jason attended the Chiefs' playoff game in frigid Buffalo temperatures this season. He ripped off his shirt and chugged beers as he sat in a suite with Swift.

It was the Jason Kelce way.

He's been a showman off the football field, singing the national anthem at a 76ers game, partying with the Phillie Phanatic and pounding a beer to a roaring ovation at a Phillies postseason game.

But it was his work on the offensive line that made him a star. Kelce ended his career by making 156 straight starts, and he earned six All-Pro Team selections.

He was part of Philadelphia's core four of stars that have experienced droughts and championship runs, multiple coaches and one of the worst collapses in the city's sports history. Fletcher Cox and Brandon Graham are the lone holdovers from former coach Andy Reid's last season with the Eagles in 2012. Lane Johnson completes the four veteran anchors and was a rookie in former coach Chip Kelly's first season in 2013.

Kelce is the first one to call it quits.

Sirianni added to Kelce's lore by shipping a keg of beer to the center's home to entice him to return in 2022.

"No Keg videos this year," Kelce wrote Monday morning on social media.

Eagles fans came prepared to toast Kelce with a cold one.

Kelce and his family were greeted by cheering fans - and yes, one even brought a keg of beer - outside the complex.

He thanked a long list of mentors from his high school football, hockey and lacrosse coaches and his old band teachers at Cleveland Heights (Ohio) high school for putting up with a "rambunctious kid that was will full of immaturity, stupidly and cockiness."

He thanked his coaches at Cincinnati for believing he could play center, a fortuitous decision that made him a great fit in Philadelphia, then thanked his four coaches with the Eagles.

Kelce choked up again thanking Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie for his leadership and general manager Howie Roseman for drafting him. He shared memories of his Eagles career and said he would never forget the day Reid called to tell him Kelce had been drafted by the Eagles. Kelce's father rushed into a room, "with tears streaming down his face," in a pure joy of the moment.

He never made the Eagles regret their decision.

"Has there ever been a more perfect marriage between a player, a city and a team," Lurie said in a statement.

# Skechers Saipan Marathon registration closes today



To day, March 7, is the last day to register for Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024, offering full marathon, half marathon, 10K, and 5K courses on March 9, 2024, in the Marianas.

As of Tuesday, Nov. 5, over 470 runners from the Marianas, Korea, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Guam, USA, France, and Poland have registered for the race. Registration is open at <https://raceroster.com/events/2024/78587/saipan-marathon-2024> and is \$110 for the full marathon and \$80 for the half marathon, 10K, and 5K. Full marathon participants must be age 18 or older. Half marathon participants must be age 14 or older. With valid photo ID, students ages 18 or younger may register for \$60.

Cash prizes will be awarded for the top finishers. In-kind prizes will also be awarded for the Wacky Awards: Best Costume, Best Body Paint, Shortest Shorts, Most Awesome Shoes, Ugliest Shoes, and Craziest Hair.

"The Saipan community is in for an incredible weekend with about 500 runners from the home team and around the world turning out for Skechers Saipan Marathon," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "We can all be proud of our world-class marathon—complete with international certification and professional timing, and we invite everyone to make our runners feel welcomed."

Registration will close at 5pm ChST on Thursday, and mandatory race packet pickup will be on March 8 from 4pm to 6pm at American Memorial Park Amphitheatre in Garapan, Saipan.

Concepcion also reminded drivers of the new course this year.

"Due to construction on Beach Rd., the course will follow Chalan Pale Arnold—Middle Rd.—in the southbound lane this year," said Concepcion. "We ask drivers to exercise caution, drive slowly, and follow all traffic officer directions. And as always, we thank



Workers build the start/finish line arch at American Memorial Park for the Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024 on March 9, 2024, in the Marianas. Nearly 500 runners have registered for the event, with all courses this year on Chalan Pale Arnold (Middle) Rd. from Oleai to Marpi. The outer southbound lane will be closed to traffic during the race.

drivers for looking out for our race participants."

Drivers are reminded that on Saturday morning that the outer southbound lane along Chalan Pale Arnold will be closed from Oleai north to As Matuis for the runners only. Drivers may still use the inner southbound lane with caution.

Race organizers also clarified to runners that the half-way cut-off point at 8:30 a.m. for the full marathon will be at the Winsco Store in San Roque on the return from Marpi.

Skechers Saipan Marathon is a certified measured course

by World Athletics in cooperation with the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races. The marathon is co-organized by the MVA and Northern Marianas Athletics and is sanctioned under the Northern Marianas Athletics rules and regulations.

Skechers is Exclusive Title Sponsor of the race. Coca-Cola, Foremost, Subway, Powerade are Platinum Sponsor. Gold Sponsors are Bridge Capital, IT&E, and Triple J Saipan. Silver Sponsors are United Airlines, Matson, The Athlete's Foot, Boarderline, and All-Star

Sporting Goods. Additional sponsors are American Memorial Park and Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands.

In-kind contributors are WESTCO, Bike Pro, M&E Enterprises Inc. Saipan, and Run Saipan. Aid stations are provided by Aqua Resort Club Saipan, Bridge Capital, Office of Vice Speaker Joel Camacho, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, DFS T Galleria, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, MY WAVE Clubs of Marianas High and Hopwood Middle Schools, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, PDM Promoters,

half, the Ayuyus were down by a margin of 16 points as the Dolphins continued to wreak havoc on the court. KHS' aggressiveness in the paint was quickly subdued by a tight-knit MHS defense, but they still managed to squeeze in a few points.

KHS' Frankie Satur tried to double team with Austin Diaz with the game clock winding down as they went back-to-back at the basket, but MHS' sturdier gameplay only lengthened their lead. KHS, despite scoring more than MHS in the second half, still fell short by 11 points.

and Grace Christian Academy lost all seven games.

The playoffs is set to start today, Thursday, March 7, and will continue tomorrow, with the championship round scheduled for this Saturday, March 9 at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

**MHS 41** — Licayan 11, Sanchez 8, Laquan 7, Suba 6, David 5, Tengco 3, Balignasay 1.

**KHS 30** — Satur 8, A. Diaz 8, J. Diaz 4, Igital 4, J. Camacho 2, R. Camacho 2, Alatamirano 2.

**Scoring by halves:** 26-10, 41-30.

and Saipan World Resort.

Additional supporters are Dept. of Public Safety, Dept. of Public Works, Division of Fire & Emergency Medical Services, Div. of Parks & Recreation, Jeju Air, Veterans Affairs Office, and Marianas Health Services.

The race begin and end at American Memorial Park in downtown Garapan, starting at 4:30am. Cash prizes will be awarded for top finishers and by age division in the marathon. Participants will receive a Limited Edition Official Saipan

Marathon T-shirt, official Saipan Marathon medal, Certificate of Completion and one entry to the awards banquet on March 9 at Hyatt Regency Saipan. Additional guest fees for the awards banquet are \$40 for ages 12 and up, \$20 for ages 3-11.

For more information, visit <https://raceroster.com/events/2024/78587/saipan-marathon-2024> or [www.mymarianas.com](http://www.mymarianas.com) or contact MVA Community Projects coordinator Ed Diaz at (670) 664-3210 or [ediaz@mymarianas.com](mailto:ediaz@mymarianas.com). (PR)

## TOKAHAO

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fifth inning.

### Hagu La'mun 33, Wazzup 15

It was a run-frenzy game, but Hagu La'mun posted the most and won, 33-15.

The second inning seemed to stretch on forever as Hagu La'mun scored the bulk of their runs—nine, with a 3-run homer by Jerome Delos Santos. The fourth inning was dragged out too as they scored eight, making the game, 24-10.

Wazzup went on to score just five more runs, while Hagu La'mun continued to pound on Wazzup's pitcher, Bruce Laniyo.

After another run-filled seventh inning, with a grand slam by Eric Tudela, Wazzup conceded and lost by a margin of 18 runs.

### Asahi 10, Peliliu 9

Asahi slipped past Peliliu, 10-9. Asahi scored all their runs

in the first four innings of the game, which managed to hold on despite a rallying Peliliu.

Peliliu came close after a three-run homer by Walter Macaranas that made it 9-10, but they failed to score and left runners stranded on base, which gave the W to Asahi.

### Redmen 12, Tuturamz 0

The Redmen silenced Tuturamz, 12-0.

Mike Tomokane added to their one run lead in the second with a homer. They would score seven runs in that inning for a big 8-0 lead.

The Redmen went on to score one in the fourth from a solo shot by Lefty Shiro, then another homer in the fifth from Jimmy Manalo. They would score two more runs after, and cement their 12-0 win as Tuturamz failed to round the bases.

Tuturamz had only nine hits throughout the game. Results of the women's division will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

## TANHOLDINGS

*From page 20*

who learned from their mistakes from the last half and ensured they secured the win, no matter how close a margin.

Elite Force's Mark Aycardo broke the ice with a free throw to make it 89-88 after minutes of back-and-forth action. But it was TanHoldings' possession with a little over a minute left. TanHoldings' Dindo Pablo's attempt from downtown missed and was swiftly rebounded by Olopai, who assisted Ben William for a 3-pointer that switched the favor over to their side, 91-89.

Then, a bad pass by Elite Force with 43 seconds left became their downfall. They resorted to fouling TanHoldings that resulted into 2 more points, and it was too little too late for Elite Force to make a comeback with 0.9 left on the clock.

TanHoldings' Ray Olopai put up the highest numbers with 27 points, followed by Christian Bravo's 23 markers with Icesac Perez and Ben William chipping in 15 points each. Elite Force's Fernando

collected the most for his team with 25, while Andrew Sy and Manuel Gatbonton scored 18 points apiece.

Afterwards, Bourbon Bar & Cafe slipped past Unity Trade, 79-72.

In the standings after Tan Holdings' 3-1 record and Elite Force's 2-1 record are Kagbros at 2-1; Stag and Long Shot with 1-1; Tax Pro/Triple L and La Mesa Kusina with 1-2 records each; and Napa Auto Parts at 0-2. In Bracket A, Choju leads with an undefeated three wins, Best Deal at two wins and no loss; Savemore and Bourbon Cafe & Bar with 2-1; Unity Trade at 2-2; Premier Builders at 1-2; Live 2 Live at 0-2; and Yuman with 0-3.

**TanHoldings 93** — Olopai 27, Bravo 23, Perez 15, William 15, Suba 6, Pablo 4, Jinang 3.

**Elite Force 90** — Fernando 24, Sy 18, Gatbonton 18, Reyes 12, Aycardo 9, Ceniza 9.

**Scoring by halves:** 47-41, 83-83, 93-90, OT.

## MHS

*From page 20*

support of their school's team and the players hyped up with each explosive shot.

The Ayuyus were gunning for revenge from the get-go, but the Dolphins put a stop to that quickly. The Ayuyus had more attempts than shots and by the end of the first half, scored just 10 points to the Dolphins' 26.

MHS' Charlz Sanchez led the way with 6 points along with a 3-pointer in that first half, and was assisted by the rest of the starting five.

At the start of the second

half, the Ayuyus were down by a margin of 16 points as the Dolphins continued to wreak havoc on the court. KHS' aggressiveness in the paint was quickly subdued by a tight-knit MHS defense, but they still managed to squeeze in a few points.

In the varsity standings as the regular season wrapped up, MHS leads with the aforementioned seven wins; KHS is second at 6-1; Saipan Southern High School has a 5-2 record; Mount Carmel School is 4-3; Dr. Rita H. Inos High School is at an even 2-2; Saipan International School is 2-5; Tinian High School has a 1-2 record; Agape Christian School is 1-6;



Dean Wade has big 4th quarter as Cavs rally past Celtics, 105-104.

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# Saipan Tribune Sports

Skechers  
Saipan  
Marathon  
registration  
closes today.

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20 THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2024

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

# Tokahao blasts Saipal, 17-4



LEIGH GASES

In this file photo, Tokahao pitcher Jojo Attao swings at a pitch during one of their games in the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association master's league at the Dandan Softball Field.

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER

Tokahao blasted Saipal, 17-4, in the continuation of the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association master's league last Sunday at the Dandan Softball Field.

Six runs came in the first inning for Tokahao and went through their whole lineup while Saipal was still getting their bearings straight. By the

second, Saipal had scored just two runs for a 2-6 game.

Tokahao's Jojo Attao ensured a quick second and third inning as Saipal only got one

man on base, but Tokahao's offense went kaput as well. The only reprieve was their four-run lead, and after another quiet fourth inning by Saipal, Tokahao could breathe again.

Tokahao went on to score five in the fourth, two more in the fifth, and wrapped up the game with four in the last inning. Only two more runs would be scored by Saipal in the fifth inning.

Mark Villagomez went a perfect 4-for-4 and scored four

runs, while Clint Quitugua and Geoff Cruz scored three runs each for Tokahao.

## Sufa 20, Man Amigos 14

Sufa pummeled Man Amigos, 20-14.

After a quiet first inning, Man Amigos' bats came alive in the second inning and just went wild from there alongside an equally as fiery Sufa.

Man Amigos' Jess Guerrero

started the ball rolling with a two-run jack in the second, followed by three runs in the third, and four in the fourth. Jun Palacios then went on to add two in the last inning from another two-run dinger, just before three runs scored in the fifth and sixth inning.

However, it wasn't enough as Sufa scored the much needed five runs in the sixth that was enough to hold on to the W.

Sufa's J.J. Cabrera contributed a homer, followed by back-to-back homers by Paul Salalila and Mario Aguon in the

See TOKAHAO on Page 19

## TanHoldings wins 3 in a row, hands Elite Force 1st loss

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER

  
TanHoldings blew their lead in the last minutes of the game, but bounced back in a thriller OT showdown against Elite Force in the Legends Sports Association Invitational Basketball League Season 2 last Tuesday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

With the win, TanHoldings has won three straight, while they handed Elite Force their first loss in an action-packed 93-90 game.

TanHoldings had a comfortable 10-point lead with four minutes left in the last half, but they got too comfortable as Elite Force—Bracket B's No. 1 seeded team—had more fight

and punch left in their game.

From 10 points, TanHoldings quickly saw their lead whittle down after Elite Force's Dan Fernando became the ball magnet they needed. He threw

up back-to-back baskets, first a 3-pointer, then a fast-break play, followed by another three to tie the game up as TanHoldings was left stunned and rooted in disbelief.



LEIGH GASES

Tan Holdings' Icesac Perez goes for a jumper as he's defended by an Elite Force player during their game that went to OT in the Legends Sports Association Invitational Basketball League Season 2 last Tuesday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

The only plays TanHoldings could do was not to let Elite Force score with just mere seconds on the clock. Elite Force had the possession with 12 seconds left, but TanHoldings' man-to-man defense plus Elite Force's pressure to get their shots in, failed to clinch them the win.

TanHoldings had a sliver of opportunity with 1.6 seconds left, but a hail-mary by Raymond Olopai grabbed nothing but air and forced the five minutes of extra time.

It was all or nothing for both teams, and with Elite Forces' undefeated record on the line, they needed the win. A few missed opportunities by both teams in the final two minutes made the game still deadlocked, 88-88.

Grit and determination showed who wanted the W the most and it was TanHoldings

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## MHS unscathed heading into playoffs

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER

In a clash of the undefeated titans, the Marianas High School Dolphins came away unscathed after their last regular season game in the 2023-2024 IT&E Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League.



They went seven-for-seven games heading into the playoffs after edging erstwhile undefeated Kagman High School Ayuyus, 41-30, last Friday at the MHS Gymnasium.

The game had an air of last season's championship game between the two—the crowd roaring in

See MHS on Page 19



LEIGH GASES

In this file photo, Marianas High School's Charlz Sanchez goes for an uncontested layup during a game in the 2023-2024 IT&E Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.